

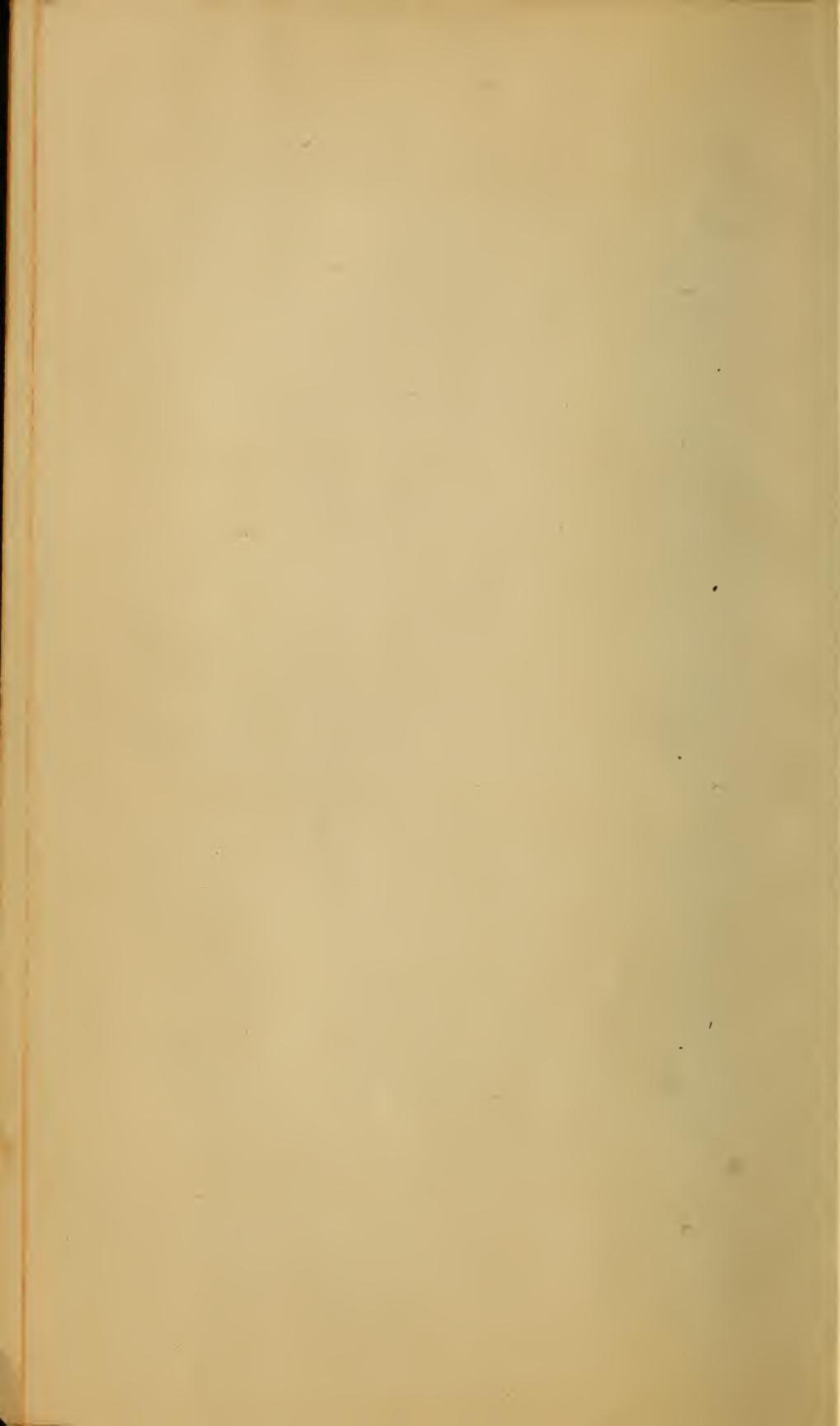
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A VOICE FROM THE PEWS:

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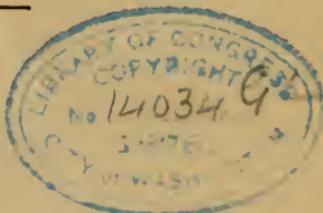
A TABERNACLE SUPPLEMENT

BY

A MEN DER.

Benj. J. Burnham

Diese Prediger stumpften sich die Bähne an den Schalen ab, indessen
ich den Kern genoß.—GOETHE.



BOSTON:

BLANCHARD BROS., 533 TREMONT STREET.
NEW ENGLAND NEWS COMPANY, 37 COURT STREET.

1877.

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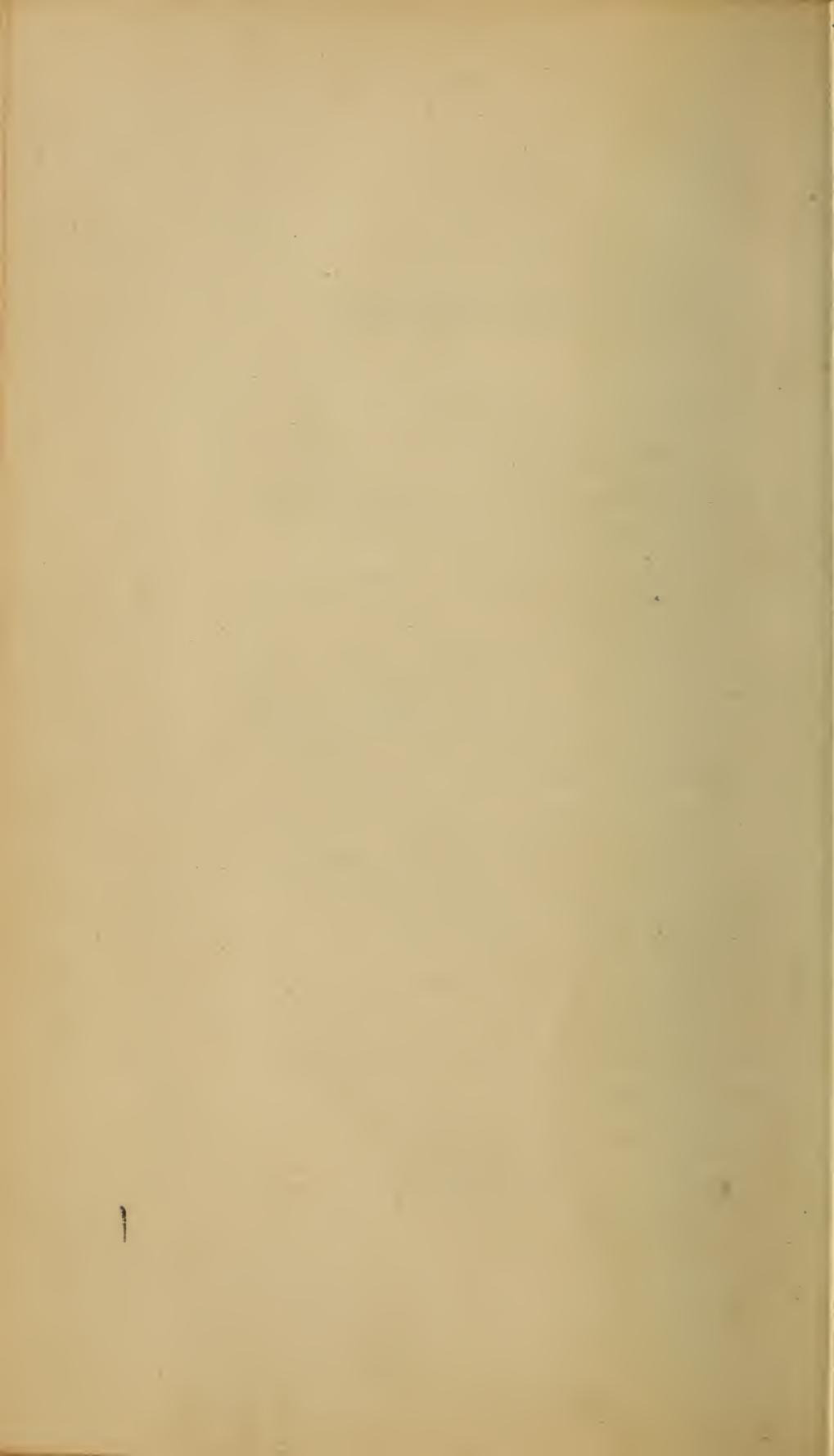
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APPENDIX



A P P E N D I X.

A.

[Page 111: "Benefit of Prayer, Subjective."]

As an example under the subjective theory, the writer would quote a paragraph or two from a book of "Prayers," published at Boston, in 1862, by Walker, Wise & Co. No matter who was the author; the matter is the prayer:—

"FATHER, we know thou wilt always remember us, nor askest thou the persuasive music of our morning hymn, nor our prayers' poor utterance to stir thy loving-kindness toward us; for thou carest for us when sleep has sealed our senses up and we heed thee no more; yea, when enveloped in the smoke of human ignorance or of folly, thine eye is still upon us, thou understandest our needs, and doest for us more and better than we are able to ask or even to think. But in our feebleness and our darkness, we love to flee unto thee, who art the light of all our being, the strength of all that is strong, the wisdom of what is wise, and the foundation of all things that are; and while we lift up our prayer of aspiration unto thee and muse on thy presence with us, and the various events of our life, the fire of devotion must needs flame in our hearts, and gratitude dwell on our tongue. * * Chiefliest of all do we bless thee for that noble son of thine, born of a peasant mother and a peasant sire, who in days of great darkness went before men, his life a pillar of fire leading them unto marvellous light and peace and beauty. We thank thee for his words, so lustrous with truth, for his life, fragrant all through with piety and benevolence; yea, Lord, we bless thee for the death which sinful hands nailed into his lacerated flesh, where through the wounds the spirit escaped triumphant unto thee, and could not be holden of mortal death. We thank thee for the triumphs which attend that name of Jesus, for the dear blessedness which his life has bestowed us, smoothing the pathway of toil, softening the pillow of distress, and brightening the way whereon truth comes down from thee, and life to thee goes ever ascending up. Father, we thank thee for the blessings which this great noble soul has widely scattered throughout the

world, and most of all for this, that his spark of fire has revealed to us thine own divinity enlivening this mortal human clod, and prophesying such noble future of achievement here on earth and in thine own kingdom of heaven with thee. * * * Help us to use the nature thou hast given us wisely and well. We would not ask thee to change thy law, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, but pray that ourselves may accord our dispositions to thine own infinite excellence, and order the outgoings and incomings of our heart in such wisdom that our lives shall continually be in accordance with thy life, that thy will shall be the law of our spirits, and thy love prevail forever in our hearts. So may we be adorned and strengthened with manifold righteousness, mount up with wings as eagles, run and not be weary, or walk and never faint. So may thy kingdom come and thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

The pastor who put up the foregoing prayer was denounced therefor as "infidel" by a prominent "evangelical" in whose family was often heard, in the tune of "Naomi," the following sweet hymn of Merrick's:

"Author of good, we rest on thee:
Thine ever watchful eye -
Alone our real wants can see,-
Thy hand alone supply.

In thine all gracious providence
Our cheerful hopes confide;
O let thy power be our defence,-
Thy love our footsteps guide.

And since by passion's force subdued,
Too oft with stubborn will,
We blindly shun the latent good,
And grasp the specious ill,-

Not what we wish, but what we want,
Let mercy still supply:
The good unasked, O Father, grant;
The ill, though asked, deny.

[No. 633, *Methodist Hymns.*]

B.

[Page 112: "Sin and Hell."]

Reference is had to Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, in his masterly story of "Elsie Venner." (A few months before her birth, her mother had been bitten by a crotallus.)

"Ministers work out the machinery of responsibility in an abstract kind of way; they have a sort of algebra of human nature in which *friction* and *strength* (or *weakness*) of *material* are left out. You see a doctor is in the way of studying children from the moment of birth upwards. For the first year or so, he sees that they are just as much pupils of their Maker as the young of any other animals. Well, their Maker trains them to *pure selfishness*. Why? In order that they may be sure to take care of themselves. So you see when a child comes to be, we will say a year and a day old and makes his first choice between right and wrong, he is at a disadvantage; for he has that *vis a tergo*, as we doctors call it, that force from behind, of a whole year's life of selfishness, for which he is no more to blame than a calf is to blame for having lived in the same way purely to gratify his natural appetites. Then we see that baby grow up to a child, and if he is fat and stout and red and lively, we expect to find him troublesome and noisy and perhaps sometimes disobedient more or less: that's the way each new generation breaks its egg-shell; but if he is very weak and thin, and is one of the kind that may be expected to die early, he will very likely sit in the house all day and read good books about other little sharp faced children just like himself, who died early, having always been perfectly indifferent to all the out-door amusements of the wicked little red-cheeked children. Some of the little folks we watch grow up to be young women, and occasionally one of them gets nervous, what we call hysterical, and that girl will begin to play all sorts of pranks,—to lie and cheat, perhaps in the most unaccountable way, so that she might seem to a minister a good example of total depravity. We don't see her in that light. We give her iron and valerian, and get her on horseback if we can, and so expect to make her will come all right again. By and by we are called to see an old baby, three score years and ten or more old. We find that this old baby has never got rid of that first year's teaching which led him to fill his stomach with all he could pump into it, and his hands with everything he could

grab. People call him a miser. We are sorry for him; but we can't help remembering his first year's training and the natural effect of money on the great majority of those that have it. So while the ministers say 'he shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven,' we like to remind them that with God all things are possible."

"Once more. We see all kinds of monomania and insanity. We learn from them to recognize all sorts of queer tendencies in minds supposed to be sane, so that we have nothing but compassion for a large class of persons condemned as sinners by theologians but considered by us as invalids. We have constant reasons for noticing the transmission of qualities from parents to offspring, and we find it hard to hold a child accountable in any moral point of view for inherited bad temper or tendency to drunkenness,—as hard as we should to blame him for inheriting gout or asthma. I suppose we are more lenient with human nature than theologians generally are. We know that the spirits of men and their views of the present and future go up and down with the barometer, and that a permanent depression of one inch in the mercurial column would affect the whole theology of Christendom.

"Ministers talk about the human will as if it stood on a high look-out, with plenty of light, and elbow-room reaching to the horizon. Doctors are constantly noticing how it is tied up and darkened by inferior organization, by disease and all sorts of crowding interferences, until they get to look upon Hottentots and Indians—and a good many of their own race—as a kind of self-conscious blood-clocks, with a very limited power of self-determination. That's the tendency, I say, of doctors' experience, but the people to whom they address their statements of the results of their observation belong to the thinking class of the highest races, and *they* are conscious of a great deal of liberty of will. So in the fact that civilization with all it offers has—on the whole—proved a dead failure with the aboriginal races of this country, they talk as if they knew from their own will all about that of a Digger Indian. * * * * *

"We know that disease has something back of it, which the body isn't to blame for, at least, in most cases, and which very often it is trying to get rid of. Just so, with sin. I will agree to take a hundred new-born babes of a certain stock and return seventy-five of them in a dozen years true and honest if not 'pious' children. And I will take another hundred of a different stock, and put them in the hands of certain Ann-street or Five-point teachers, and seventy-five of them will be thieves

and liars at the end of the same dozen years. . . . You inherit your notions from a set of priests that had no wives and no children, or none to speak of. It didn't seem much to condemn a few thousand millions of people to purgatory or worse for a mistake of judgment. They didn't know what it was to have a child look upon their faces and say 'father.'"

C.

[Page 118: "Happiness and Heaven."]

George Elliot's context is too pertinent and illustrative to be omitted:

"She was on the brink of drowning herself in despair. Some ray or other came, which made her feel that she ought to live—that it was good to live. She is full of piety and seems capable of submitting to anything when it takes the form of duty."

"Those people are not to be pitied," said Gwendolen, impatiently. "I have no sympathy with women who are always doing right. I don't believe in their great sufferings."

"It is true," said Deronda, "that the consciousness of having done wrong is something deeper, more bitter. I suppose we faulty creatures can never feel so much for the irreproachable as for those who are bruised in the struggle with their own faults. It is a very ancient story, that of the lost sheep, but it comes up fresh every day."

"That is a way of speaking—it is not acted on, it is not real," said Gwendolen, bitterly. "You admire Miss Lapidoth because you think her blameless, perfect. And you know you would despise a woman who had done something you thought very wrong."

"That would depend entirely on her own view of what she had done," said Deronda.

"You would be satisfied if she were very wretched, I suppose?" said Gwendolen, impetuously.

"No, not satisfied—full of sorrow for her. It was not a mere way of speaking. I did not mean to say that the finer nature is not more adorable; I meant that those who would be comparatively uninteresting beforehand may become worthier of sympathy when they do something that awakens in them a keen re-

morse. Lives are enlarged in different ways. I dare say some would never get their eyes opened if it were not for a violent shock from the consequences of their own actions. And when they are suffering in that way, one must care for them more than for the comfortably self-satisfied. One who has committed irremediable errors may be scourged by that consciousness into a higher course than is common. There are many examples. Feeling what it is to have spoiled one life may well make us long to save other lives from being spoiled." . . . Some real knowledge would give you an interest in the world beyond the small drama of personal desires. It is the curse of so many lives, that all passion is spent in that narrow round, for want of ideas and sympathies to make a larger home for it. . . . Take what you said of music for a small example—it answers for all larger things—you will not cultivate it for the sake of a private joy in it. What sort of earth or heaven would hold any spiritual wealth in it for souls pauperized by inaction? If one firmament has no stimulus for our attention and awe, I don't see how four would have it. We should stamp every possible world with the flatness of our own inanity—which is necessarily impious, without faith or fellowship. The refuge you are needing from personal trouble is the higher, the religious life, which holds an enthusiasm for something more than our own appetites and vanities. The few may find themselves in it simply by an elevation of feeling: but for us who have to struggle for our wisdom, the higher life must be a region in which the affections are clad with knowledge."

D.

[Page 118: "Happiness and Heaven."]

The writer can present nothing more satisfactory on the subject of Human Destiny than the following summary of part of a sermon by Rev. Herman Bisbee, at the Hawes Place Church, South Boston, Mass., Dec. 10th, 1876: Text, Matt. v. 20.

Every candid reader of the New Testament has observed that the discourse of Christ abounds in warnings of some imminent danger to the human soul; something to be shunned at the cost of property, standing, friends and life itself. As to the character of this danger, the indefiniteness of his expressions

leaves a large margin for honest differences of opinion. . . . To foretell all that constitutes heaven, one must be omniscient; and the same is true as to hell. Language fails to exhaust these themes, just as the eye fails to take in the Universe when it looks at the stars. And this infinitude of the concerns of the soul has afforded ground for the play of imagination, until exaggerated phantasies have superseded simple facts. And then, as with everything else in life, the revolting aspect of one extreme has caused a reaction to the opposite.

But the fact that heaven means the sum of human blessedness, is not affected by the limitations of our knowledge how far that blessedness may go, what varieties it has, what laws of unfoldment, or what places for realization. So also, what Christ calls destruction or hell has a clear and solemn meaning, although no man may paint its outlines, or describe its sorrows. One who looks out upon the sea has a clear and magnificent idea of Ocean, although he sees but its beginnings. So far as we do behold human life, there stand out the two great possibilities. In Buddha, in Socrates, in Mohammed, in Swedenborg, in all nations and peoples have these two ideas lain side by side as we see them in the New Testament. By every analogy which we know, the two ways of human life that Jesus pointed out,—one broadleading to loss, the other narrow but to gain—extend into the immortal world; there, as here, each soul will pursue what it loves, and seek that which it enjoys. If here we learn to love intrigue, and power, and falsehood, and excitement, we shall seek them over there, as certainly as we shall seek honesty and purity and peace. Nor do the two roads less diverge merely because the beginnings of divergence are often imperceptible. . . .

The finite cannot comprehend the infinite. We are to judge of what is to come by what is,—not by the goodness of God. Any theologian could prove from the goodness of God, that no such world as this could ever be,—that no such thing as evil or imperfection could exist; but facts would refute him. We can only reason from what is, to prove in the first place the goodness of God. In this life we see good men sometimes become evil, and evil men break off and grow good. I know of no warrant for saying that those who continue to increase in evil during this life will increase in evil forever: or that those who here increase in good will so increase forever. We may speculate, but conjecture is not knowledge. We know the tendency; we know the momentum of habit is such that Christ's words are true, that there is danger in one way, safety in the other. All heroic and consecrated effort is based on the possibility of being

overcome by temptation, and the counter possibility of overcoming, and experiencing the ineffible glory. . . .

If eternity has no finality, we cannot speak of what will finally happen. . . . The doctrine that the righteous and the wicked are to be assembled and separated,—the righteous welcomed to heaven, and the wicked sentenced and driven to everlasting torments,—is probably an error made, originally by interpreting certain expressions too literally. . . . The awful fact is not that God ever sentences a man to be where he does not wish to be, but that a human being should ever choose dark and debased surroundings. . . . Christ has sometimes been spoken of as carrying in his person the sins of the whole world. He evidently carried upon his spirit a load of mountain weight. But we may reasonably say it was a clear and sympathetic perception of the two kinds of life possible to man; of the joy, peace and glory consequent upon the one, and the unrest, remorse, and darkness attendant upon the other. . . . No feebler terms than “hell” and “condemnation” “heaven” and “joy of the Lord” could fully express his idea of the destinations. . . .

For an eloquent confirmation of the foregoing views of Human Destiny, see Horace Greeley’s essay on “Reforms and Reformers,” in the Appendix of his “Recollections of a Busy Life,” page 524: “Who shall say that Nebuchadnezzar on his throne is happier than Daniel in his prison?” &c.

A VOICE FROM THE PEWS.

I.

REASON AND REVELATION.

Well ! but one may decline your invitation for the very reason that he is *not* “thoughtless.” He may fear that he will put himself in a false light. He may see the subjective benefit of prayer, and honestly fail to appreciate the objective theory. Until your exhortation is more explicitly qualified, to “step forward” will seem to indorse all you imply about Adam’s fall, a personal devil, a Trinity-council and covenant, imputed righteousness, and carnal reason. But your kindness entitles you to mine. Moreover, I want your good work to be permanent. The objection that “it is a mere transient excitement” ought to be without any foundation whatever.

Come, then, and let us reason together. Neither of us, I trust, is a being to whom Reason is an abomination. “Reason,” says Bishop Butler, “is the only faculty we have wherewithal to judge concerning anything, even Revelation itself. Its duty in relation to the Scriptures is to judge not whether they contain things different from what we should have expected from a wise, just and good Being, but

whether they contain things plainly contradictory to wisdom, justice and goodness" as elsewhere taught us of God.

And here let us not confound absurdities with mysteries,—what opposes reason with what surpasses it. The latter we must always revere, the former, never. Why wince at having a line drawn between Faith and credulity *somewhere*? Why be intolerantly displeased at Park Benjamin's tolerant pleasantry :

"Great faith it needs, according to my view,
To trust in that which never could be true."

Especially if we say amen to the sentiment :

"On argument alone our faith is built.
Fond as we are, and justly fond of faith,
Reason, we grant, demands our first regard.
Reason, the root, fair faith is but the flower.
The fading flower may die, but reason lives,
Immortal like our Father in the skies."

Fortunately, however, the remark of President Jefferson to Dr. Priestly is less applicable to church-folk of the present day than to infant-brimstoners, namely, that from their ratiocinative indolence, or from views of personal interest, the most eloquent Teacher, the most benevolent character, and the most sublime system that ever was upon earth, had been so disfigured as to be rejected by the unthinking part of mankind. Now-a-days, if a clergyman would compromise his prestige for common sense, he has only to hurl the cheap epithet "Infidel!" at everybody who assents to Leonard Swett's comment on President Lincoln :

"He believed in the existence of a God as the author and ruler of the universe, in Jesus Christ as

the teacher and example, and in the immortality of the soul. He believed in the growth and development of mankind by the practice of virtue, and in the dwarfing and deteriorating effects of vice. Carrying such convictions into his daily life, he practiced the golden rule, and lived himself a life of self-denial and personal purity. He placed upon his fellow man, for his benefit, no yoke, and so far as lay in his power would permit no one else to do it. He lent to every man he ever met a helping hand, and walked through life with malice toward none and charity for all. If such a man is not a christian, surely must every christian be improved by becoming such a man."*

* Others than Jew, Christian, or "Infidel" have made this christian—or Buddhist—philosophy their "ΒΙΟΥ ΚΥΒΕΡΝΗΤΗΣ." Take, for instance, the words of Horace, (*Odes*, iv. 9,) who died B. C. 9:

Non possidentem multa vocaveris
Recte beatum: rectius occupat
Nomen beati, qui deorum
Muneribus sapienter uti,
Duramque callet pauperium pati,
Pejusque leto flagitium timet;
Non ille pro caris amicis
Aut patri perire.

Whereof Sir Henry Wotton's hymn would serve as a translation: (Sir Henry flourished before Paley's "Proposition II.")

How happy is he born or taught,
Who serveth not another's will;
Whose armor is his honest thought,
And simple truth his highest skill:
Whose passions not his masters are;
Whose soul is still prepared for death;
Not tied unto the world with care
Of prince's ear or vulgar breath:
Who God doth late and early pray
More of his grace than goods to lend,
And walks with man from day to day,
As with a brother and a friend.
This man is freed from servile bands
Of hope to rise, or fear to fall.
Lord of himself, though not of lands,
And having nothing,—yet hath all.

Not an unpractical or unpopular definition of Religion is, that it is morality heightened by emotion. Any preacher who attempts to divorce morality from religion is likely to meet the smile of some hearer that is thinking of the recent experience of a colored missionary in Louisiana, who finding his flock forgetful of the moral law, began to give them a series of discourses on lying and stealing. They stood it for a Sunday or two and then revolted, a deacon addressing him thus: "We like you bery much, and we want to make it comf'ble for you. But de fac is, you see, we don't like dis preaching about lyin' and stealin'; we must hab our Sundays for 'ligion.'"

As a rule, goodness is so attractive that one loves to assent to whatever a good man says; the exceptional dissent comes when he is suspected of being crotchety and irrational. It is when you assert unqualifiedly that the whole Bible is infallible and inspired, that you do yourself injustice, and defeat your grand and holy purpose. Whatever of supplement I may suggest is with an earnest desire to promote "Salvation," but in the uncontracted sense of that very trite word. Soundness of seed is the first essential to the sower's product. However often and flippantly "bold disbelief," (in the theologically technical sense of the term,) is declaimed against, there is another mischief:

"The fault that saps the life
Is doubt half crushed, half veiled; the lip assent
Which finds no echo in the heart of hearts."

All moral teaching worthy of the name, whether in the Bible or elsewhere,—addresses itself to the *consciousness* of those to whom it speaks. Only as it proves an interpreter of floating and partially formed thought, or is the expression of feelings before but dimly recognized or understood, does any book produce impressions of much real value. The softened heart responds to words which awake no echo in other breasts. Without affinity there can be no assimilation; without moral sympathy there can be no spiritual reproduction. The sheep know the voice of the Good Shepherd. Everybody is “In quest,”* but an earlier inspired One than Whittier has testified “few there be that find.”

We conclude, then, it is the pure in heart who are blessed with discernment of the pure and eternal verities: just as it is the lover of music who catches melody and harmony; the lover of fun who appreciates the humor of Dickens; the lover of sympathy—the unfortunate—who fathoms the pathos of

* “The riddle of the world is understood
Only by him who feels that God is good,
As only he can feel who makes his love
The ladder of his faith; and climbs above
On th’ rounds of his best instincts: draws no line
Between mere human goodness and divine,
But judging God by what in him is best,
With a child’s trust leans on a father’s breast,
And hears unmoved the old creeds babble still
Of kingly power and dread caprice of will,
Chary of blessing, prodigal of curse,
The pitiless doomsman of the universe.
Can hatred ask for love? Can selfishness
Invite to self denial? Is he less
Than man in kindly dealing? Can he break
His own great law of fatherhood, forsake
And curse his children? Not for earth and heaven
Can separate tables of the law be given.
No rule can bind which He himself denies;
The truths of time are not eternal lies.”

Shakespeare. Reason, combined with the good-will essential to fair-mindedness, (or with a "holy spirit," if you prefer the expression,) constitutes the verifying faculty for sifting and appropriating the good-inspired portions of any writings,—*the Bible not excepted.*

II.

LITERAL INSPIRATION.

Again: Let us see how further we can go along together. Had Paul told Timothy* that everything which was in writing was "God-breathed," we might without irreverence declare the statement to be true only in a restricted sense. But, as in construing wills and statutes, every presumption is to be taken in favor of general consistency, and as Paul quoted from the Septuagint, which probably included some of the apocrypha, I venture to assume that you favor the version given by Drs. A. Clark, S. Davidson, Von Tischendorf, and others, namely: "Every scripture inspired by God is also profitable for doctrine, for conviction, for rectification, for discipline which is in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete," &c. He might not have meant to include the merely historical, however true and useful; genealogies, however important in their place; poems or proverbs, however wise, which are but expressions of human experience; references to physical phenomena ordinarily expressed in colloquial language; and all acts or utterances which are not in accordance with the temper of Jesus. From these, indeed, a devout mind can draw profit-

* II Timothy, iii. 16.

able instruction ; so it can find “sermons in stones,” but this fact does not make the stones inspired.

To cite a few instances : none of the “judges” were “perfect before God.” Samson’s conduct speaks for itself. Gideon kills Zeba and Zalmunna, saying he would have saved them alive if they had not killed his brothers.* The motives and conduct of Jeptha and Gideon, Deborah and Barak, fall far below the Christian standard. Samuel was liable to err. David is said to have caused the Gibeonites to hang the seven sons of Saul “before the Lord.”† Nor does all this interfere with the declaration of the partisan Hebrew (probably Apollos,) that “through faith they subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises and (figuratively) stopped the mouths of lions.”‡ Great faith, in one sense of the term, is not unfrequently accompanied —especially in warriors—by great defects of moral character. The prayer,§ “let his [one’s enemy’s] children be vagabonds and beg continually,” is unquestionably unchristian.

The apostles, then, do not claim that Scripture is a thing of the letter rather than of the spirit. To any such pretension the least flaw in expression would be fatal ; translation would be destruction. They quote the sense rather than the exact words. Parables and other figures often express truth more fully and completely than could any literal and pure-

* Judges, viii. 19. † II. Sam. xxi. 9. ‡ Heb. xi. 32. § Ps. cix. 10.

ly syllogistic statement. A mere good mathematician makes a poor advocate, judge, or cabinet minister,—so Napoleon testifies.

And right here must be made a concession. Critics who “stick in the bark” fancy the Bible to be full of contradictions. Many alleged discrepancies are more apparent than real. Let us here give these a summary consideration. I am indifferent whether you say that the “bow” in heaven first became visible after the flood, or whether that, previously existing, it was only appropriated as the token of some covenant; whether literally men thought to build a tower that should reach unto heaven, or whether an alleged “city and tower” were symbolical of an attempted centralization; whether the confusion of tongues was decretal and special, or something figurative of the tendency of language to dialection.

Indeed, who can tell how far our differences of impression and opinion are due to deficiencies of expression? A familiar instance is the manifold ideas of God.* Or take this very word “Inspiration.”

* “Who dare express Him?
And who profess him,
Saying: I believe in Him!
Who, feeling, seeing,
Deny His being,
Saying: I believe Him not!
The All-enfolding,
The All-upholding,
Folds and upholds he not
Thee, me, Himself?
Arches not there the sky above us?
Lies not beneath us firm the earth?
And rise not on us shining
Friendly the everlasting stars?

With all my effort to treat it from your own stand-point, you must perceive my own idea is a sort of “cross betwixt” all of the lexicographer’s four tropical definitions,—the four derived by various usage from the two literal ones, of “drawing in air” and “breathing into.” Yet this does not really vary much from the second part of Webster’s third definition: “or the communication of the divine will to the understanding by suggestions or impressions on the mind which leave no room to doubt the reality of their supernatural origin.” “Don’t you think,”—propounds the physician in Dr. Holmes’ “Elsie Venner” to the doctor of divinity who had quoted St. Paul on “opposition of science,”—“don’t you think the inspiration of the Almighty gave Newton and Cuvier ‘understanding’? . . . You are clear I suppose, that the Omniscient spoke through Solomon, but that Shakespeare wrote without his help”?

Far be it from me to intimate that there is in Jewish history or in any mythology anything that is absolutely bad and worthless. Every legend,—as for

Look I not eye to eye on thee,
And feel’st not, strонging
To head and heart, the force,
Still weaving its eternal secret,
Invisible, visible, round thy life?
Vast as it is, fill with that force thy heart,
And when thou in the feeling wholly blessed art,
Call it then what thou wilt,—
Call it Bliss! Heart! Love! God!
I have no name to give it!
Feeling is all in all:
The name is sound and smoke,
Obscuring Heaven’s clear glow.”

GOETHE in “Faust:” J. B. Taylor’s translation, page 221.

instance those of the labors of Hercules—had some germ of truth.* Sir Walter Scott has demonstrated to what a beautiful poetic use may be put the tradition of the cloud-pillar; namely, in Rebecca's hymn in "Ivanhoe":

"When Israel of the Lord beloved,"

What I would affirm is that the manifold means and ends for ascertainment and encouragement in the performance of human duties are not all of equal value; that in a collection of writings by various scribes of different centuries some passages are of a value therefor subordinate to that of others; and that when the *prima facie* meaning of any passage is opposed to actually demonstrated knowledge, our first impression thereof may, without irreverence, accept modification. Methinks when in the dying hand of Copernicus was placed the first printed copy of his work "On the Revolutions of the Celestial

* "Hans told us a wonderful story of Buddha giving himself to a famished tigress to save her and her little ones from starving. And he said you were like Buddha. That is what we all imagine of you."

"Pray don't imagine that," said Deronda, when "Buddha let the tigress eat him he might have been very hungry himself."

"Perhaps if he was starved he would not mind so much about being eaten," said Mab, shyly.

"Please don't think that Mab; it takes away the beauty of the action," said Mirah.

"But if it were true, Mirah?" said the rational Amy; "you always take what is beautiful as if it were true."

"So it is," said Mirah, gently. "If people have thought what is the most beautiful and the best thing, it must be true. It is always there; it is a truth in thought though it may never have been carried out in action,—it lives as an idea."

"But was it beautiful for Buddha to let the tiger eat him?" said Amy, changing her ground. "It would be a bad pattern."

"The world would get full of fat tigers," said Mab.

Deronda laughed but defended the myth. "It is like a passionate word," he said; "the exaggeration is a flash of fervor. It is an extreme image of what is happening every day—the transmutation of self."—GEORGE ELLIOT.

Orbs," he not at all repented of having written to his friend, the Pope: "If there be any who, though ignorant of mathematics, shall presume to judge concerning them, and dare to condemn this treatise because they fancy it is inconsistent with some passages of Scripture, the sense of which they have miserably perverted, I regard them not, but despise their rash censure."

III.

INCONGRUITIES NOT DISCREPANCIES.

Again we may agree. In adverting to II. Timothy, iii. 16, we have already seen that our King James Bible is not without errors of translation. Referring you to Dr. S. Davidson's learned "Introduction," for further illustrations, I shall content myself with citing only one more instance, the story of Jeptha's daughter, to show that the mischief of such defects may extend to the adoption of an absurdity. In Judges xi. 30, the Hebrew *vav* should be translated "or," as it often is, elsewhere; the passage should read "or I will offer it up for a burnt offering." Jeptha did not slay his daughter, but only dedicated her to perpetual virginity to serve in the tabernacle. He knew that the sacrifice of human beings was prohibited by the Mosiac law. In an interval of two months the priests would have intervened to prevent the barbarous deed.

Many seeming discrepancies are attributable to a difference in the dates of the discordant passages. Some refer to a state of society where slavery, polygamy and private revenge were lawful, and where the rules of duty were strictly drawn only as to sins deemed more highly dishonorable to God and injurious to the welfare of men. But in the New Testa-

ment, one who is careful not to swear falsely but unscrupulous as to speaking falsely is not "good." The gist of sin is the evil thought; the act is quite a subordinate matter. Others are attributable to differences of authorship. One writer may indorse, another merely narrate a statement, and a third aim only to grasp the ground thought. One may state a fact according to the oral tradition of his time and neighborhood, another according to another report. Thus one* puts the census of Joab at 800,000 Israel and 500,000 Judah; another† at 1,100,000 Israel and 470,000 Judah.

Others arise from differences of stand-point or of object on the part of the respective authors. The *role* of the historian, unlike that of the moralist, is a neutral one; only the latter is amenable to the tribunal of ethics for the correctness of his praise or censure. Moreover, the sayings of the latter may seem to conflict with each other when lying in different planes of thought, or contemplating different ends. Thus Bacon's "Christian Paradoxes" make the pious man lose his life to save it; a peacemaker, yet a continual fighter; fearing always, yet bold as a lion; a freeman, though a servant; loving not honor among men, yet prizing a good name.

Others arise from different methods of arrangement, whether chronological, logical, or typographical. Some writers more than others may adapt their expressions to prevalent opinions and custom-

* II. Sam., xxiv. 9. † I. Chron., xxi. 5.

ary forms of speech. We speak of “sunrise” and “sunset” without astronomical precision. By the battle of Bunker Hill we mean the battle fought on Breed’s Hill.

Other incongruities arise from different modes of reckoning. Of the thermometer 100 degrees Centigrade means 80 Reaumur, and 212 Fahrenheit. Sometimes only round numbers are given, as in Ezra, ii. 69, where the gifts were 5000 lbs. of silver and 100 garments; the precise number in Nehemiah vii. 70-72, being 4700 lbs. silver, (500 and 2200 and 2000,) and 97 garments, (30 and 67.)* The 50 shekels of silver in II. Sam. xxiv. 24, were paid for the floor and oxen; the 600 shekels of gold in I. Chron., xxi. 25, were paid “for the place.” A farm may have been bought for \$1000; the owner after making additions and improvements may say his “place” has cost him \$5000. Gray mentions 240 “bones” in the human body; Wilson, 246,—each is right, according to his own ideas of a “bone.”

Others arise from the peculiar oriental use of metaphor and hyperbole. Isaiah speaks of God as a “bridegroom,”† David as a “rock,”‡ and elsewhere as having wings and feathers.§ Others arise from a plurality of names. Thus Gesenius gives eight different Hebrew terms for “counsel,” twelve for “darkness,” ten for “law,” twenty-three for “wealth,” and thirty-two for “destruction.”

*The 6100 drams of gold in Ezra is probably a copyist’s mistake; the amount in Nehemiah footing up at 4100 drams.

† Is. lxii. 5. ‡ Ps. xlvi. 9. § Ps. xcii. 4.

Others arise from using the same word with an opposite signification. Our word "door" sometimes means the opening, and sometimes the swinging valve which closes that opening. A cook "stones" raisins, but not as a boy "stones" an apple-tree. To "let" once meant both to permit and to hinder. The Latin *sacer* means both holy and accursed. The Hebrew *saqual* means both to pelt with stones and to free from stones; *barak*, both to bless and to curse; *naker*, to know and not to know; *yarash*, to possess and to dispossess.

Multitudes of discrepancies arise from errors in the manuscripts. Printing was not used until the fifteenth century. In ancient Hebrew, letters were probably used for numerals. The distinctions between many pairs of the letters are so minute as to consist merely in the acuteness or obtuseness of an angle, or the length or straightness of a line,—as between the Greek small *Nu* and *Upsilon*. Thus the 30,000 men for the ambuscade in Josh. viii. 3, should be 5,000 as in verse 12.* In many manuscripts the "50,000" is omitted in I Sam. vi. 19; leaving only 70 men of the little village of Bethshemesh slain for looking into the ark. In II. Chron. xxii. 2, the copyist in making the age of Ahaziah of Judah forty-two, instead of twenty-

*Or verses 12 and 13 not being in the Septuagint, may be regarded as a marginal note which has crept into the text.

two as in II. Kings viii. 26, doubtless mistook one numeral letter for another.†

This cause of discrepancies, namely, liability to error in copying manuscripts, combined with the liability to error in the original reporter in matter gathered from oral tradition rather than from his own observation, demands careful and candid attention. St. Luke is by no means the only writer whose proper prologue must be: Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth a declaration of things which actual witnesses told them of, I'll make a statement to help remedy thy uncertainty, my good Theophilus.

Of the five principal manuscripts of the Greek New Testament, the oldest, namely, the Vatican, was written about A. D. 325; the Sinaitic, about the same time; the Alexandrian, about A. D. 350; the Ephraim, a little later; and the Beza, about A. D. 490. Whether any of these writers copied from the original manuscripts written by the apostles and their scribe-disciples or from copies of the originals, cannot now be ascertained. In the collation of the manuscripts for Griesbach's edition of the New Testament, about 150,000 various readings were discovered. These, however, are all said to pertain to minor matters, so that no duty is rendered obscure or doubtful. The fact that several passages are in our King James version which are not in the oldest

† So also in I. Kings xxii. 51, where Ahab is made to die in the seventeenth year of Jehosaphat, instead of the nineteenth, as in verse 41 compared with xvi. 29.

manuscripts * and are generally conceded to be opinions, does not at all mar the general character of the Bible, so but that chancellor Kent's words are true: "The general diffusion of the Bible is the most effectual way to civilize and humanize mankind; to purify and exalt the general system of public morals; to give efficacy to the just precepts of international and municipal law; to enforce the observance of prudence, temperance, justice and fortitude; and to improve all the relations of social and domestic life." Or the words of Lord Chief Justice Hale: "There is no book like the Bible for excellent learning, wisdom, and use." But these words must not be construed to mean more than their authors intended. Thus the language of Sir Isaac Newton, accounting the scriptures to be "the most sublime philosophy," and to exhibit "more sure marks of authenticity than any profane history whatever," are no assertion that everything in the canon can be proved to be authentic. Newton would be the last person to ignore the fact that evidence has three degrees of force: plausibility, probability, and demonstration. It is one thing to affirm that the Bible contains more of the infallible element than any other book; and quite another to declare it infallible.

In conclusion, then, without asserting that there are no irreconcilable discrepancies in the Bible, we may safely observe with Dr. Townsend † that many

*E. g., that in Italics, (I. John v.,) concerning the three witnesses. † "Credo," page 91.

an apparent one is but “as *the idle ripple of a single wave among the pebbles, when every wave moves in the same direction.*” ‡

‡ The reader is referred to an excellent work to which the writer is much indebted. “Alleged Discrepancies” &c. by J. W. Haley, D. D. Andover, Mass. W. F. Draper, pp. 473.

IV.

THE FORMATION OF THE CANON.

Again: we shall not differ materially as to the history of the canon; for our sources of information are probably the same. Let us then briefly gather and summarize.

As to the Old Testament canon, the nucleus was the “book of the law,” mentioned* as discovered by Hilkiah and read by Shaphan, in the time of Josiah, about B. C. 650. This “book” was probably Deuteronomy; the “evils and troubles”† being evidently those when “the line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab”‡ were threatening Jerusalem and Judah; Israel having already gone to ruin. Around Deuteronomy the rest of the Pentateuch and the story of Joshua’s conquest gathered. This constituted the Thora, or “book of the law,” read by Ezra § under Nehemiah’s restoration, about B. C. 550. To that collection many an old book had given up its treasures, and then itself vanished forever. The Maccabean historian tells us || that Nehemiah brought together the things concerning the kings (the books of Judges, Samuel and Kings) and the prophets, (Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and the twelve minor prophets,) and David’s things, (the

* In II. Chron., xxxiv. 14-32, and II. Kings, xxii., xxiii. † Deut., xxxi. 17. ‡ II. Kings, xxi. 13. § Neh. viii. 1-18. || II. Mac. ii. 13.

Psalms,) and the letters of kings about offerings.* He then says† that Judas [Maccabeus] brought together in addition all the things that were lost by reason of the war, and they remain, &c. These were probably the then recent book of Daniel, the old poem Job, the Proverbs, Ethics and Canticles, collected chiefly under Solomon's auspices, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles. They constitute the “Ketubim,” or “writings,” mentioned by the translator of Ecclesiasticus, and are the third division of the Hebrew Bible; the “Thora” or Law, and the “Nebiim” or Prophets being the two others.

During the two centuries between Judas Macca-beus and the fall of Jerusalem, materials for a fourth instalment of scriptures accumulated and found their way into the Greek Bible, such as Baruch, To-bit, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, and the additions to Daniel and Esther. The Æthiopian Bible preserved the Book of Enoch, which is quoted in Jude, 14, as if a genuine prophecy. The word “resurrection” first appears in the Apocrypha.

The New Testament canon was delivered by the two Synods of Carthage, the first held A. D. 397, the second, A. D. 419. St. Jerome, who died A. D. 420, published in A. D. 383 a Latin version of the four Gospels, with a prefatory letter to the Pope, stating that the custom of the Latin Christians does not receive the Epistle to the Hebrews among the canonical scriptures, nor that of the Greek churches

*E. g. the gift of King Sileucus II. Mac. iii. 3. †II. Mac. ii, 14.

John's Apocalypse. Of the so-called Second Epistle of Peter he says: "It is denied by most to be his." Of the Epistle of James he says: "It is asserted to have been brought out by somebody else under his name." As to Jude: "Inasmuch as the author appeals to the Book of Enoch, which is apocryphal, the Epistle is rejected by most." And two of the three epistles attributed to St. John Jerome says "are asserted to be by John the Elder." The two Synods appear to have been more earnest than critical; for they imagined that Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus are by Solomon, although Wisdom was composed in Greek hardly half a century before the Christian era. St. Augustine, who died A. D. 430, says: "I receive the Gospel only upon the authority of the Catholic Church." Eusebius, who died A. D. 340, says* that Scriptures were current, "put forth by the heretics in the name of the Apostles, whether as containing the Gospels of Peter and Thomas and Matthias, or those also of any others besides these, or as containing the acts of Andrew and John and the other Apostles." But he accepts the four Gospels. So also does Origen, who died A. D. 254, and Irenaeus, who wrote about A. D. 180. But neither Ignatius, Polycarp, nor Justin Martyr testify on this precise point. Papias, about A. D. 140, said he preferred "things from the living and abiding voice;" meaning probably speakers who had heard the voice of Jesus. Ignatius, Justin Martyr, and Hegesippus

* Eccl. Hist. iii. 25.

quote from the Gospel of the Hebrews, an Aramaic copy of which Jerome found in Syria and translated. This Gospel mentions that a light was seen on Jordan at Christ's baptism ; that Christ appeared to James, (as recorded by Paul, but not in the Four;) and that Jesus said : “Handle me and see, for I am not a bodiless ghost.” The first epistle of Clement is included in the Alexandrian manuscript. The manner in which he and his cotemporaries quote shows that there was no settled canon of the Gospels in the earlier half of the second century. Thus we see, *the record when we first get it has passed through at least half a century of oral tradition, and through more than one written account.*

V.

JOHN AND HIS GNOSTIC REDACTOR.

But then a topic is reached whereon our views may differ.* There is clear internal evidence that even if the original disciples always understood the sayings of Christ, their successors have often labored under misconceptions. Take, for example, the Fourth Gospel. That some such Gospel existed as early as A. D. 125, appears from the "Philosophumena," (written A. D. 201-219,) which gives quotations therefrom by Basileides and other Gnostics, between A. D. 125 and 150. But that Gospel was probably not a canonical one to Justin Martyr in A. D. 147; otherwise he could not have misquoted therefrom Christ's words as to the new birth. But John was a Jew, and it would be a very unnatural and violent presumption to suppose that the following passages (quoting from the Vatican MS.) were written by a Jew: "as the manner of the Jews is to bury;" "because of the preparation of the Jews;" "after the manner of the purifying of the Jews;" "there arose a question between some of John's disciples, and a Jew about purifying." For a Jew so to speak would be like an Englishman's talking

* And here, as under the last topic, my acknowledgments are due to older Biblical students than myself, especially to Matthew Arnold. See his late work "God and the Bible;" London: Smith, Elder & Co. Boston: James R. Osgood & Co.

about the English people's Derby, or a Yankee's telling you he had seen an American's Fourth of July. Again, twice the writer speaks of Caiaphas as "high-priest of that year;" but the high-priesthood was not a yearly office. It is like saying "Mr. Pierce was president of that year." A lowly disciple is represented as having ingress to a grandee's palace and being "an acquaintance of the high-priest." Not only the social but the geographical distinctions of Palestine are confounded. "Bethany beyond Jordan," is like Ogdensburg beyond the St. Lawrence. This mistake of the three earlier manuscripts was corrected in later ones by putting "Bethabara" for "Bethany," as it stands in our version. A hyssop stalk with its bunch of flowers would itself serve as a sponge, without any addition, as in John xix. 29. The last supper (xviii. 28,) is placed on the thirteenth of Nisan, instead of the fourteenth as the Synoptics relate. But John kept the fourteenth.

Again, the lofty strain of the prologue is nearly inconceivable as that of a Galilean fisherman; at least, unless we cut loose from the probable, and dodge into the realm of the supernatural. The form in which the Fourth Gospel presents its ideas is Greek,—a style flowing, ratiocinative, articulated. Gnostic ideas are handled in the introduction with all the ease and breadth which we find in the masters of Greek Gnosticism.

The tradition which (as Eusebius, the early eclesi-

astical historian, avers) accredits the Fourth Gospel to the Apostle John, says that John was moved by his friends to give his recollections. And Epiphanius alleges that John wrote reluctantly at the age of ninety ; both accounts importing that John's friends had a hand in the work. This view is confirmed by John, xxi. 23 : "We know his [John's] testimony is true ;" and xix. 35 : "That man knoweth that he saith true." The composer of a work would hardly refer to himself so strangely.

The facts of the case, then, are probably as follows : In his old age, St. John, at Ephesus, has *logia*, "Sayings of the Lord," and has incidents in the Lord's story, which have not been published in any of the written accounts that were beginning at that time to be handed about. The elders of Ephesus—whom tradition afterwards makes into apostles, fellows of St. John—move him to bestow his treasure on the world. He gives his materials, and the presbytery of Ephesus provides a redaction for them and publishes them. The redaction, with its unity of tone, its flowingness and connectedness, is by one single hand ;—the hand of a man of literary talent, a Greek christian, whom the church of Ephesus found proper for such a task ; a man of soul also, a theologian. A theological lecturer, perhaps, as in the Fourth Gospel he so often shows himself,—an earlier and a nameless Origen ; who in this one short composition produced a work outweighing all the folios of all the Fathers, but was content that

his name should be written only in the Book of Life. Yet the Gospel is John's, because its whole value is in the *logia*, sayings of the Lord which it saves ; and by John these *logia* were furnished. But at the beginning of the second century when the work appeared, there would be many who knew well that the redaction was not John's. Therefore the church of Ephesus, which published the work, gave to it that solemn and singular *imprimatur*: “He who hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true ; and that man knoweth that he saith true, that ye may believe.” The Johannine Gospel was read with love and respect ; but for at least fifty years, it remained, like the three others, liable to changes, interpolations, additions ; until at last, like them, towards the end of the second century, by ever increasing use and veneration, it passed into the settled state of Holy Scripture.

The Johannine author has new *logia* or sayings of the Lord at his disposal ; and he has some new incidents. But his treasure is the *logia*, and the important matter for him is to plant his *logia*. The narrative, skipping so unaccountably backwards and forwards between Galilee and Jerusalem, might well be thought but a matter of infinitely little care to him,—a mere slight framework, in which to set the doctrine and discourses of Jesus. It would, therefore, be nothing strange if some sayings were put at the wrong occasion ; and some jolts occur like that at the end of the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters :

"As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise let us go hence. I am the true vine and my Father is the husbandman." Or the jolt in introducing the dialogue with the woman of Samaria,* "Jesus, tired with his journey, sat *thus* by the well." Thus? How? There's not a word to tell us. The writer, probably, had in his mind John's own words: "Jesus, tired with his journey, sat, *as I have been telling you*, by the well." So also,† "He, lying *as I am telling you* on Jesus' breast," &c. So also ‡ "he manifested himself *as I am going to tell you*." Another defective adjustment of context occurs§ where Jesus is said to have departed into Galilee, "for Jesus himself, testified that a prophet hath no honor in his own country." That would be a reason for staying away from Galilee, not for going there. The writer should have prefaced John's words by saying: "And this he did notwithstanding his own testimony." So also, as to that abrupt and inconsequential sentence: || "Now the passover, the feast of the Jews, was nigh."

The report of the words ** "a little while and ye shall see me," was probably based on some imperfectly understood remark of Jesus which referred to a spiritual rather than a physical resurrection. It is acknowledged,†† that "When he was risen from the dead his disciples remembered that he had said" "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." No notes were taken down day by day, as

*John iv. 6. †xiii. 25. ‡xxi. 1. §iv. 44. ||vi. 4. **xvi. 9. ††ii. 22.

by a Boswell. So also, as to an incident adapted to fulfil a prophecy ; * “When Jesus was glorified then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.” And again,† “As yet they knew not the scripture that he must rise again from the dead.” If he had actually said words as reported in Luke xviii. 31–33, “they shall scourge him and put him to death and the third day he shall rise again,” they could not have been so ignorant as represented.

The passage,‡ “on the third day I shall be perfected,” is a reminiscence of Hosea vi. 2, where the third day means “presently.” So also something said by Christ § about following him in regeneration was misapprehended by the disciples as referring to a sort of New Jerusalem when they “would sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

That Jesus gave the primitive themes which are the basis of chapters twelfth to seventeenth of the Fourth Gospel inclusive, that the combination of themes is the Evangelist’s, and that by the Evangelist Jesus is made to repeat himself over and over again, to correct things as he never corrected them, and to say things he never said, may be regarded so probable that it becomes certain. For the primitive themes are in the characteristic manner of Jesus, and we do not see from whom else they can have proceeded. The combination, repetition and development of the themes are in the characteristic man-

* John xii. 16. † xx. 9. ‡ Luke xiii. 32. § Matt. xix. 28.

ner of the Evangelist. Take, for example, the theme,* “It is expedient for me, for you and the world that I depart.” How inapt is the Evangelist’s turn that the world would exult at Christ’s death! Or take the sweet and precious words of Jesus after he has washed the disciples’ feet at the last supper. Relieve them from the separation which the Evangelist, for the purposes of his long discourse and its developments, inflicts on them,—simply put them together again, as by their subject they belong together,—how their effectiveness and impressiveness increases, how heightened is our enjoyment of them! Thus:† “If I, your master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord, neither is he that is sent greater than he that sent him. A new commandment give I unto you that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends if ye do that which I command you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you. Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends, for all things that I hear of my Father I make known unto you. These things I command you that ye love one another.”

*John, xiv. 28; xvi. 7. †John xiii. 14-16, 34, 35: xv. 12-17.

Again, take the words of Jesus :* “The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified.” In their utterances, texts originally proper to the Messias-ideal of Jesus,† or to that of the Jews,‡ or to the renewed Israel§ or to the righteous man in general,|| we may conceive as present and contributory in his mind when he saw his death imminent and strangers desirous to see him. But how the Evangelist, all through the seventeenth chapter, develops this primitive theme with one other,** “That they may be one as we are one!” It is as much in character for a disciple to love to prolong the theme of Christ’s glory and dilate upon it, as it is little in character for Jesus himself to do so. Jesus checked questions of theosophy. He contented himself with taking the conception of God as the Jews had it, and as the Old Testament delivered it, as the eternal and righteous Father; and with saying of himself: “I came forth from God.” But words of self-glory which the Evangelist makes him say,†† are not at all in the manner of Jesus. Again, take Christ’s words to Martha:‡‡ “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believeth on me, though he die, shall live, and he who liveth and believeth on me shall never die.” Out of that very *logion* which points to a wholly new idea of resurrection,—but passed from hearer to hearer, brooded over, misapprehended—grew up, not improbably, the miracle of the raising of Lazarus.

* John, xii. 23. † Isaiah, lii. 15. ‡ Isaiah, xi. 10. § Isaiah, Ixii. 2.
|| Ps., lxxiii. 24. ** John, xvii. 11, 21—23. †† xvii. 5, 24. ‡‡ xi. 25.

VI.

“ SALVATION.”

Again :* we have seen in the Old Testament, an immense poetry growing round and investing an immortal truth, the “ secret of the Eternal :” *Righteousness is Salvation.* We behold in the New, an immense poetry growing round and investing an immortal truth, the secret of Jesus ; *He that will save his life shall lose it, he that will lose his life, shall save it.* The best friends of mankind are those who can lead it to feel animation and hope in presence of the religious prospect thus profoundly transformed. The way to affect this is by bringing men to see that our religion, in this altered view of it, does but at last become again that religion which Jesus Christ really endeavored to found, and of which the truth and grandeur are indestructible. It would do Christians generally a great injustice, to assume that the entire force of their Christianity lies in the fascination and subjugation of their spirits by the miracles which they suppose Jesus to have worked, or by the material promises of heaven which they suppose him to have offered. Far more does that vital force lie in the boundless confidence, consolation, and attachment, which the whole being

* See “Literature and Dogma,” by Matthew Arnold. London; Smith, Elder & Co. Boston: James R. Osgood & Co.

and discourse of Jesus inspire. What Jesus, then, himself thought sufficient, Christians too may bring themselves to accept with good courage, as enough for them. What Jesus himself dismissed as chimerical, Christians too may bring themselves to put aside without dismay.

The central aim of Jesus was to transform for every religious soul the popular Messias-ideal of his time, the ideal of happiness and salvation of the Jewish people; to disengage religion, one may say, from the materialism of the Book of Daniel. Fifty years had not gone by after his death, when the Apocalypse replunged religion in this materialism; where, indeed, it was from the first manifest that replunged, by the followers of Jesus, religion must be. It was replunged there, but with an addition of inestimable value and of incalculable working,—the figure and influence of Jesus. Slowly this influence emerges, transforms the turbid elements amid which it was thrown, brings back the imperishable ideal of its author. To the mind of Jesus, his own resurrection after a short sojourn in the grave was the victory of his cause after his death, and at the price of his death. His disciples materialized his resurrection; and their version of the matter falls day by day to ruin. But no ruin or contradiction befalls the version of Jesus himself. He *has* risen, his cause has conquered; the course of events continually attests his resurrection and victory. The manifest unsoundness of popular Christianity in-

clines at present many persons to throw doubts on the truth and permanence of Christianity in general. Creeds are discredited, religion is proclaimed to be in danger, the pious quake, the world laughs. Nevertheless the prince of this world is judged; the victory of Jesus is won and sure. Conscience and self-renouncement, the secret of Jesus, are set up as a leaven in the world, nevermore to cease working until the world is leavened. That this is so, that the resurrection and re-emergent life of Jesus are in this sense undeniable, and that in this sense Jesus himself predicted them, may in time, surely, encourage Christians to lay hold on this sense as Jesus did.

So, too, with the hope of immortality. Our common materialistic notions about the resurrection of the body and the world to come are, no doubt, natural and attractive to ordinary human nature. But they are in direct conflict with the new and loftier conceptions of life and death which Jesus himself strove to establish. His secret, "He that will save his life shall lose it, he that will lose his life shall save it," is of universal application. It judges, not only the life to which men cling here, but just as much, the life we love to promise ourselves in the new Jerusalem. The immortality propounded by Jesus must be looked for elsewhere than in the materialistic aspirations of our popular religion. *He lived in the eternal order, and the eternal order never dies:*—this, if we may try to formulate in one

sentence the result of the sayings of Jesus about life and death, is the sense in which, according to him, we can rightly conceive of the righteous man as immortal, and aspire to be immortal ourselves. And this conception we shall find to stand us in good stead when the popular materialistic version of our future life fails us.* So that here again, too, the version which, unfamiliar and novel as it may now be to us, has the merit of standing fast and holding good while other versions break down, is at the same time the version of Jesus. In the parable of the marriage feast, the conspicuous delinquent is sentenced to be bound hand and foot, and taken away, and cast into outer darkness. In the severity

* “So to the calmly gathered thought
The innermost of truth is taught,
The mystery dimly understood,
That love of God is love of good,
And, chiefly, its divinest trace
In Him of Nazareth’s holy face;
That to be saved is only this,—
Salvation from our selfishness,
From more than elemental fire
The soul’s unsanctified desire,
From sin itself, and not the pain
That warns us of its chafing chain;
That worship’s deeper meaning lies
In mercy and not sacrifice,
Not proud humilities of sense
And posturing of penitence,
But love’s unforced obedience;
That Book and Church and Day are given
For man, not God—for earth, not heaven,—
The blessed means to holiest ends,
Not masters but benignant friends;
That the dear Christ dwells not afar
The king of some remoter star,
Listening at times, with flattered ear
To homage wrung from selfish fear,
But here amidst the poor and blind,
The bound and suffering of our kind,
In works we do, in prayers we pray,
Life of our life, he lives today.”

WHITTIER: “The Meeting.” In “Among the Hills,” &c.

of this sentence, Jesus marks how utterly those who are gathered to his feast may fail to know him. The misapprehending and materializing of his religion, the long and turbid stage of popular Christianity, even from the very moment of its birth, is, though inevitable, not worthy of its name; as ignorant and transient, and requiring all who would be truly children of the kingdom to rise beyond it.

Upon the exercise, then, of the verifying faculty, fair-minded reason, his doctrine, however distorted by disciples along the stream of time, has descended to us our only hope and happiness:

“As sunshine broken by the rill,
Though turned aside, is sunshine still.”

VII:

SUNDAY AND SABBATH.

Possibly you dissent from Whittier's view of the "day given for man, not God," as too broad a rendering of Mark ii. 29 : "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." So I propose now briefly to examine the Sunday question, and shall therein bring to my aid anything pertinent and undeniable, even though once uttered by an alleged heretic, who though dead yet speaketh.

Was the Sabbath ever known to Moses? This is a question not easily answered with absolute certainty. We cannot safely refer to him the whole of the ten commandments in any one of the three distinct forms in which they are presented,* these being quite different. From the time of Moses to that of Jehoram, a period of about six hundred years, there is no mention of the observance of the Sabbath as a historical fact; although in the books treating of that period, circumcision and other national peculiarities are mentioned minutely.† But from Nehemian we learn that after the return from the Babylonian exile, it was kept with considerable rigor.

* Namely, in Exodus xx., in Exodus xxxiv., and in Deut. v.

† In II. Chron. xxxvi. 21, at a date two hundred years later than the time of Jehoram, the words as to fulfilling threescore and ten years would indicate that the Sabbath had not been kept for nearly five hundred years.

The nation established synagogues, where the people freely assembled on the Sabbath and other public days, for religious instruction, and thus founded an excellent institution, which has shown itself fruitful of good results.

When Jesus came, teaching the absolute religion, piety and goodness without limitation, he placed in ridiculous contrast the lawfulness of performing the rite of circumcision on the Sabbath, and the unlawfulness of curing a man of any sickness. He even denied the alleged ground for the original institution of the Sabbath,* that God had ever ceased from work. The new wine of Christianity could not be put into the old bottles of the Jews.

After the death of Christ his followers became gradually divided into two parties, the Jewish and the Liberal Christians. Of the former, Peter and James were prominent; and their evangelists were Matthew and Apollos, who is by many critics believed to be the author of the Gospel according to the Hebrews, and of the Epistle to the Hebrews. They kept the whole Hebrew law, with its burdensome ritual; they counted Jesus as the Messiah of the Old Testament, and Christianity, therefore, nothing but Judaism brightened up and restored to its original purity. Thus Matthew represents Jesus as the Messiah giving a judicial opinion, and *ruling* that "it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath day." Matthew makes Jesus "Lord of the Sabbath day;"

* John, v. 17.

entirely omitting Mark's version, that man is of more consequence than the Sabbath. Paul, who was at the head of the liberal party, said, "Let no man judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath."* The spirit of Life as revealed by Jesus Christ had made men "free from the law of sin and death;" the Christians were not "subject to ordinances." Nor have we any proof that Paul regarded the first day of the week as a peculiar day. All we know is that in the second century the Christians pretty generally so regarded the Sunday, making it a symbol of the new creation and of the Light that had come into the world. Athanasius, who wrote three centuries after Christ, gives no authority for the improbable tradition that "the Lord changed this day from the Sabbath to the Sunday."

The Christians then regarded Sunday holy only as New-Englanders now regard Thanksgiving Day as holy,—a day of religious rejoicing and feasting. On other days they knelt in prayer; on the Sunday they stood up on joyful feet, for Light had come into the world. In A. D. 321, Constantine, the first Christian Emperor of Rome, placed Sunday among the ferial days. Theodosius forbade certain public games on Sunday, and Justinian, the transaction of public business. So also the Christmas and Easter days, not from any superstitious notion, but for the sake of public utility and convenience. In A. D.

* Coloss. ii. 16.

538, the Council of Orleans forbade labor in the fields, but not traveling with cattle, on Sunday.

The attempts made by the English government to enforce the observance of Sunday for purposes not the highest, led to a fearful reaction ; that to other and counter reactions. The oppression which makes wise men mad drove the Puritans to make Sunday a day of fear and of fasting, of trembling under the terrors of the Lord. They even called it by the Hebrew name, the Sabbath. It was, like themselves, austere, inflexible as their "divine decrees ;" not human and of man, but Hebrew and of the Jews ; stern, cold and sad. The work of conquering a wilderness and founding a state required energy the most masculine in heart, head and hands, No men could fast or work like the Puritans ; none preach, none pray, none fight as they did. The Catholic church had neglected public preaching and religious instruction ; relying rather on sensuous instruments, —architecture, painting, music. In revenge, the Puritans had a meeting-house plain as boards could make it ; tore the pictures to pieces ; thought an organ was "not of God ;" and had sermons long and numerous, and prayers full of earnestness, zeal, piety and faith ; in short, possessed of all desirable things except—an end. In avoiding old abuses, they thought they were not out of the water till they were in the fire. And many of their descendants teach that work on Sunday, amusement, common conversation, the reading of a book or paper not

technically religious, is a sin—just as clearly a sin as theft or hatred, though perhaps not so great.

The good and evil of any age are commonly bound so closely together, that in plucking up the tares there is danger lest the wheat also be uprooted, at least, trodden down. It must not be ignored that the Puritan requirement for all to attend church on Sunday, as an act of religion, was a bar extending across the stream of worldliness, filling one-seventh part of its channel wide and deep, and wonderfully interrupting its whelming tide. Did the covetous, the cruel, the strong oppress the weak for six days, the Sabbath said, “Hitherto shalt thou come but no further!” The slave was then free from his master, and the weary was at rest. Good things and great things got read out of the Bible—the rights of the weak and the duties of the strong; good things got said in sermon and in prayer; and the hearers must think as well as tremble. Begin to think in a circle as narrow as a lady’s ring, or the Assembly’s Catechism, and you will think out. Sunday was New England’s education-day. The prime cause of the superiority of her descendants in intelligence and morality must be sought in the character of the fathers; but a secondary and powerful cause is to be found also in those two institutions, Sunday and Preaching. It is not in human nature for men of intense religious activity to meet in the same church, sing the same psalm, pray the same prayer, partake of the same elements of communion, and not be

touched with compassion—each for all, and all for each. The same causes which built up religion in New England built up democracy along with it. And many a boor boy obliged to toil all the week has on Sunday stealthily studied secular studies, and risen at length to eminence among cultivated men.

But the notion that the mere act of attending church is an act of religion, has often encouraged sloth in the clergyman, and blinded him to his own defects, and had a bad effect upon his hearers. When sermons and prayers are long and numerous, one cancels another, and at the end of the day the overwearied attention refuses to serve memory. Many who have no opportunity for social intercourse except the hours of Sunday lose much of the charm of life; become ungenial, stiff, hard and cold. Then, too, there is a tendency to make religion consist in obedience to form, in compliance with custom; whereas it is really only in piety and goodness, in love to God and love to man. It would not be religious to spend the Sunday in listening to the mumblings of an idiot or the gibberings of a madman, even in attending church; it would be sinful idleness. One sermon digested is better than two undigested. Religion, dressed in her Sabbath dress, should be a welcome guest, lovely and to be desired. The effort, though made by honest men to transform the Christian Sunday into the Jewish Sabbath, if ever successful, cannot but lead to a terrible reaction. But if we abandon the superstitious notions respect-

ing its origin and orginal design, the evils that have hitherto hindered its use will soon perish of themselves. There is no danger that in our day men will abandon an institution which already has done so much service to mankind. Let Sunday and Preaching stand on their own merits, and they will encounter no more opposition than the Common School and the work-days of the week. Then men will be ready to appropriate the Sunday to the highest objects they know and can appreciate. Tell men the Sunday is made for man, and they will use it for its highest use. Tell them man is made for it, and they will war on it as a tyrant.

Although we do not need amusement so much as society, instruction, refinement and devotion, yet it seems unwise to restrain the innocent sports of children of a Sunday to the same degree that our fathers did. All this may be without impudent license on the one hand, or slavish superstition on the other. Let us use the Sunday for the body's rest, for the mind's culture, for Religion in its wide sense of piety and goodness, *for head, for heart, for soul.*

VIII.

ASCETICISM AND AMUSEMENT.

Closely allied with the last topic is a very practical question: What are, and what are not “sinful recreations?” * Among evangelical christians there has grown a tendency to strengthen the defences of character, rather than to foster its growth; to keep it from temptation, rather than to teach it to overcome temptation; to teach it its danger from the world, rather than its duty to the world. Consequently, more has been said about keeping unspotted from the world than of going into all the world and preaching the gospel to every creature; more about coming out and being separate, than knowing the truth which shall make free; more of separating wheat from tares, than of leavening lumps.

Accordingly, although physiology, common sense, experience, philosophy, all teach that amusement is a necessity of man’s nature as truly as food or drink or sleep, they regard it as unsafe, because, more readily than some abstract duties, it falls in with human inclination. Those ascetics who assert that they need no amusements and “want to die in harness,” will have an early opportunity to die. Na-

*In solving it, I am not a little indebted to a discourse once delivered by a Presbyterian clergyman, Rev. Marvin R. Vincent before the Y. M. C. A. of Troy, N. Y.

ture will not suffer even zealous christian men to violate her laws with impunity. She forbids man to labor continually, and if he persists in disregarding her prohibition, she will revenge herself by imbecility, uselessness or death.

When one asserts that youth must not dance, but may march to music in company, and go through calisthenic exercises involving a good deal more motion than dancing, it is hard to see how skipping to music converts the marching to music into sin. It is said that the *associations* make the difference ; but the advocate of this theory is shut up to proving that the associations are inseparable from the amusements. It is well known, however, that the best amusements are the ones most likely to be abused ; and these, from their intrinsic value, call most loudly upon virtue to rescue them from their abuses.

Now the uniform policy of the Gospel is to follow the parable of the leaven ; to work for the destruction of evil, chiefly through the lodgment and development of good. With what calmness did Christ move amid the moral ruin that encompassed him ! With how little of that anxious haste and longing for immediate results which characterizes so many modern reformers ! There was less of a direct onslaught upon evil, than the developing of a seed of positive truth here and there. The christian world has spent much time in peering into amusements to see what evil they contained, and has kept digging away at this instead of putting Divine

grace into them, in simple faith in God, and letting that at once purge and regulate them. The church has fenced off this and that corner of the field of recreation, and put up signs: "*All church members are warned against trespassing on these grounds, under penalty of the law,*" instead of trying to teach christians how to avail themselves, with profit and safety of any part of this field. By the faults of some theatrical representations we must, forsooth be cut off from Hamlet, Lear, Othello and Macbeth. Because of the indecencies of certain round dances,* we must not, forsooth, participate in a quadrille. Nay! Let ridicule and denunciation exhaust their armories against all positive evils; but let us not forget that these abuses are not inseparable from the amusement, which, in proper forms is healthy, graceful, innocent and highly commendable.

An amiable and excellent clergyman of New York happened to be present one evening when some young ladies went through a quadrille. He looked on with great apparent pleasure. The next morning he was rallied as having countenanced dancing; when he roundly denied the charge, and asserted that no "dancing" had taken place, but only "*a most beautiful exercise.*"

*The writer must not be understood to condemn the legitimate waltz, polka, &c. "How about 'Copenhagen?'" asks a fun-loving (proof) reader." "Is that a 'round' dance, Miss?" "Rather round, sir;" "Is it elevating?" "Really, sir, when I was play-dancing it with my grandpapa, one Thanksgiving night, I was elevated until my face was up to his own." "He stooped somewhat?" "I dare say. Give me a bow that does not 'lose its elasticity.'"

It may be true that in a season of deep religious interest in a church, there will be less disposition to amusements. But the same is true of other than religious interests; under *any* absorbing, popular excitement, men do not turn to amusement. A special religious interest will draw men's minds from *business* as well as from pleasure; and the inference to the condemnation of business is just as legitimate as to that of amusement. The aggregate of christian society has been for many years past developing a steadily increasing interest in the subject, and a corresponding liberality of sentiment respecting it. Colleges, from which in years past, students would have been summarily expelled for rolling ten pins, have now bowling alleys of their own. Persons of liberal culture and unquestionable piety, more and more are throwing open their houses to certain banned amusements very much to the enhancement of home attractions, and to the detriment of the saloons. Church legislation on this subject has kept noble and intelligent youth out of the church by insisting on their relinquishment of certain amusements, in the proper and moderate use of which they were unable to see evil.

The church is too shy of a faith in the power of good which comes eating and drinking; which sits at the table of publicans and sinners. Too many christians regard truth as a tender stripling, to be rolled up in mufflers, and suffered to walk out only in charge of certain staid nurses of theory; and not

as a man of war in panoply, and with strength enough to take care not only of itself, but of them and their trusted theories too. They are afraid the evil will overwhelm or corrupt the truth; that the leaven, instead of imparting virtue will be spoiled by the deadness of the lump. But the objection that an imagined inconsistency may offend weak brethren is pushed too far when made to extend to all the vagaries of individual prejudice, or the abandonment of principle,—the principle underlying the question whether christians will resolutely take up good and noble amusements, and give them to youth purged of their evil, or whether they shall let them remain girt with all their allurements, yet more widely separated from good, and gathering yearly to themselves new elements and associations of evil. The parents in whose family-circle dancing in proper modes and with approved associates and within reasonable hours is encouraged, are doing just so much to keep their daughters from the unhealthy hours, the immodest displays, and the indiscriminate associations of some ball-rooms.

Nor ought the general principle of purging amusements by a closer contact of religion with them to be abandoned, merely because in certain cases this regulation becomes a matter of extreme difficulty and delicacy. One ought not to refuse to denounce intemperance or crime merely because he cannot prescribe an effectual scheme for abolishing it. Whether it is desirable to see Shakespeare interpreted by

the best histrionic talent, with proper adjuncts of scenery and costume, but with nothing coarse or indecent, is one simple question; how the theater may be reformed is quite a different and complex one.

Something too may be said in favor of the discipline, the strength of certain qualities which can only be achieved by *practice* of moral theory,—by meeting and overcoming temptation in real life.

“For firmness hath its appetite, and craves
The stronger lure, more strongly to resist;
Would know the touch of gold to fling it off,
Scent wine to feel its lip the soberer;
Behold soft byssus, ivory and plumes
To say ‘They’re fair, but I will none of them,’
And flout Enticement in the very face.”*

*Right here may pertinently be quoted the “Indenture” which the Abbe gave Wilhelm Meister, to be adverted to on a following page:

“Art is long, life is short, judgment difficult, opportunity transient. To act is easy, to think is hard; to act according to our thoughts is troublesome. Every beginning is cheerful; the threshold is the place of expectation. The boy stands astonished, his impressions guide him; he learns sportfully, seriousness comes on him by surprise. Imitation is born with us; what should be imitated is not easy to discover. The excellent is rarely found, more rarely valued. The height charms us, the steps to it do not: with the summit in our eye, we love to walk along the plain. It is but a part of art that can be taught; the artist needs it all. Who knows it half, speaks much, and is always wrong; who knows it wholly, inclines to act, and speaks seldom or late. The former have no secrets and no force: the instruction they can give is like baked bread, savory and satisfying for a single day; but flour cannot be sown and seed-corn cannot be ground. Words are good but they are not the best. The best is not to be explained by words. The spirit in which we act is the highest matter. Action can be understood and again represented by the spirit alone. No one knows what he is doing while he acts aright, but of what is wrong we are always conscious. Whoever works with symbols only is a pedant, a hypocrite, or a bungler. There are many such, and they like to be together. Their babbling detains the scholar; their obstinate mediocrity vexes even the best. The instruction which the true artist gives us opens the mind; for words fail him, deeds speak. The true scholar learns from the known to unfold the unknown, and approaches more and more to being a master.—T. Carlyle’s Translation; vol. II. p. 70. Boston: Ticknor & Fields (James R. Osgood & Co. successors.)

Another objection to amusements takes the form of a question with disguised *non constat*. "Think of Paul dancing! or Peter playing billiards! Would you play chess on your death-bed? Do you think we shall have checker-boards in heaven?" The attempted *sequitur* is this: "Certain things appear incongruous with our ideas of the character and work of certain men; therefore these works are sinful." Is tent-making sinful because our fancy-picture of Paul sewing on canvass clashes with our idea of him preaching on Mars Hill? Think of Timothy skating! therefore, boys, don't skate! Think of John running with a fire-engine! therefore, merely use waterpails? On your death-bed you would not wear your hat and boots; therefore,—what? In heaven you will not marry nor be given in marriage; therefore—what?

Nay, let more joy be brought out of the world by christians! Let the Gospel be boldly carried into some things from which it has been kept aloof! Let the christian life be more in the spirit than in the letter! Let the christian conscience be clothed with principles, and not with dogmas! Let us have less of the religion that is

"Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,"

and more of that which is full of *childlike trust in the love of God and the power of truth, and of freedom purged by love from license*.

IX.

CULTURE, THOUGHT AND WORSHIP.

In saying "freedom, purged by love from license," I would imply that culture which, in individual no less than in national character, is the safeguard against anarchy. "The best man," said Socrates, "is he who most tries to perfect himself, and the happiest man is he who most feels that he *is* perfecting himself." If you answer this with Carlyle's pleasantry: "Socrates is terribly at ease in Zion," you will have to be reminded of another witty Englishman's remark: "No man who knows nothing else knows even his Bible." In our country, the multitude are jealous of "undemocratic" ideas.

"Life is a various mother . . . But to these
She came a frugal matron neat and deft,
With cheerful morning thoughts and quick device
To find the much in little."

But the vulgar ideal of frugality is not without admixture of illiberality.* As Matthew Arnold has well said,† what we want is a fuller harmonious development of our humanity, a free play of thought

* "The beings closest to us, whether in love or hate, are often virtually our interpreters of the world, and some feather-headed gentleman or lady, whom in passing we regret to take as legal tender for a human being, may be acting as a melancholy theory of life in the minds of those who live with them—like a piece of yellow and wavy glass that distorts form and makes color an affliction. Their trivial sentences, their petty standards, their low suspicions, their loveless *ennui*, may be making somebody else's life no better than a promenade through a pantheon of ugly idols."—GEORGE ELLIOT.

† "Culture and Anarchy:" London: Smith, Elder & Co.

upon our routine notions, spontaneity of consciousness, sweetness and light ; and these are just what culture generates and fosters. Proceeding from this idea of the harmonious perfection of humanity, and seeking to help itself up towards this perfection by knowing and spreading the best which has been reached in the world—an object not to be gained without books and reading—culture has got its name touched, in the fancies of men, with a sort of air of bookishness and pedantry, cast upon it by the follies of the many bookmen who forget the end in the means, and use their books with no real aim at perfection.

But what we are concerned for is the thing, not the name ; and the thing, call it by what name we will, is simply the enabling ourselves, whether by reading, observing or thinking, to come as near as we can to the firm intelligible law of things, and thus to get a basis for a less confused action and a more complete perfection than we have at present. The character of the community is the total of that of its members. The State is of the religion of all its citizens, without the fanaticism of any of them.*

* "From the first animal tendency to handicraft attempts, up to the highest practicing of intellectual art; from the inarticulate crowings of the happy infant up to the polished utterance of the orator and singer; from the first bickerings of boys, up to the vast equipments by which countries are conquered and retained; from the slightest kindness, and the most transitory love, up to the fiercest passion, and the most earnest covenant; from the merest perception of sensible presence, up to the faintest presentiments and hopes of the remotest spiritual future; all this, and much more, also, lies in man and must be cultivated: yet not in one but in many. Every gift is valuable and ought to be unfolded. When one encourages the beautiful alone, and another encourages the useful alone, it takes them

In religion there are two parts, the part of speculation, and the part of worship and devotion. Christ, in his declaration that his kingdom is not of this world, certainly meant his religion as a force of inward persuasion acting on the soul to employ both parts as perfectly as possible. The one is an individual matter; the other collective. . . . "The same devotion," says Joubert, "unites men far more than the same thought and knowledge." Man worships best with the community; he philosophizes best alone. So it seems that whosoever would truly give effect to Christ's declaration that his religion is a force of inward persuasion acting on the soul, would leave our thought on the intellectual aspects of Christianity as individual as possible, but would make christian worship as collective as possible.

Perfection,—as culture, from a thorough disinterested study of human nature and human experience, learns to conceive it,—is an harmonious expansion of *all* the powers which make the beauty and worth of human nature, and is not consistent with the over-development of any one power at the expense of the rest. But the idea of perfection as such harmonious expansion of human nature, is at variance

both to form a man. The useful encourages itself; for the multitude produce it, and no one can dispense with it: the beautiful must be encouraged; for few can set it forth, and many need it. One power rules another; none can cultivate another: in each endowment, and not elsewhere, lies the force which must complete it. . . . There are a few who at once have Thought and the capacity for Action. Thought expands, but lames; Action animates but narrows. . . . A man is never happy till his vague striving has itself marked out its proper limitation."—GOETHE, in "Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship."

with our want of flexibility, with our inaptitude for seeing more than one side of a thing, with our intense energetic absorption in the particular pursuit we happen to be following. So culture has a rough task to achieve, and its preachers are likely long to have a hard time of it.

Men of culture, wherein they have failed in morality, have been punished: but their ideal of beauty and sweetness and light, and a human nature complete on all its sides, remains the true ideal of perfection still; just as the Puritan's ideal of perfection remains narrow and inadequate, although for what he did well he has been richly rewarded. Notwithstanding the mighty results of the Pilgrim Father's voyage, they and their standard of perfection are rightly judged when we figure to ourselves Shakespeare or Virgil,—souls in whom sweetness and light, and all that in human nature is most human, were eminent,—accompanying them on their voyage, and think what intolerable company Shakespeare and Virgil would have found them.

In endeavoring to establish *the State*, or organ of our collective *best self*, of our national right reason, we are inspired by faith that we are on our way to what the Duke of Wellington admirably described as “a revolution by due course of law.” The fundamental idea of this discipline must be self-conquest, self-devotion, the following not our own individual will, but the will of God, *obedience*. Only, as the old law and network of prescriptions with

which it enveloped human life were evidently a motive power not driving and searching enough to produce the result aimed at,—a patient continuance in well-doing, self-conquest,—Christianity substituted boundless devotion to that inspiring and affecting pattern of self-conquest offered by Christ; and by the new motive power, of which the essence was this,—though the love and admiration of Christian churches have for centuries been employed in varying, amplifying, and adorning the plain description of it,—Christianity, as St. Paul truly says, “establishes the law,” and in the strength of the ampler power which she has thus supplied to fulfil it, has accomplished the miracles of her history.

X.

PHARISAISM AND CONVICTION.*

But what does Paul mean in saying Christianity “establishes the law?” Howsoever you may, further on, differ with me as to his views of resurrection, I think we shall here harmonize, provided you will make certain allowances for Paul’s Orientalism of speech. For instance, when he says “God hath concluded them all in unbelief that he might have mercy upon all,” you will not assume that he means to assert formally that God acted with this set design; but being full of the happy and divine end to the unbelief spoken of, he, by a vivid and striking figure, represents the unbelief as actually caused with a view to this end.

We, moreover,—we prosaic Occidental readers—are not apt enough to comprehend Paul’s mode of expression when he Judaizes. A Jew himself, he uses the Jewish scriptures in a Jew’s arbitrary and uncritical fashion, as if they had a talismanic character; as if for a doctrine, however true in itself, their confirmation was still necessary, and as if

*In the analysis of Paul’s character and experience, the writer acknowledges his great indebtedness to a sermon preached more than a quarter of a century ago, by a beloved clergyman of the Maine Methodist Conference, Rev. Benjamin Burnham, lately deceased at Groton, Vermont; also, to the recent masterly treatise by Matthew Arnold, entitled, “*St. Paul and Protestantism;*” London: Smith, Elder & Co.

this confirmation was to be got from their mere words alone, however detached from the sense of their context, and however violently allegorized or otherwise wrested. To use the Bible in this way, even for purposes of illustration, is often an interruption to the argument, a fault of style; to use it in this way for real proof and confirmation, is a fault of reasoning.. An example of the first fault may be seen in the tenth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, and in the beginning of the third chapter; in either place, his point that faith comes by hearing, and his point that God's oracles were true though the Jews did not believe them, would stand without their scaffolding of Bible quotation. An instance of the second fault is in the third and fourth chapters of the epistle to the Galatians, where the Biblical argumentation by which he seeks to prove his case is as unsound as his case itself is sound.

Accordingly, as Paul, having always religious edification in direct view, never set out his doctrine with a design of exhibiting it as a scientific whole, we must find out for ourselves the order in which his ideas naturally stand, and the connection between one of them and the other, in order to arrive at the real scheme of his teaching, as compared with the schemes exhibited by certain creed-compilers.

What sets the Calvinist in motion seems to be the desire to flee from the wrath to come; what sets the Methodist in motion, seems to be the desire for eter-

nal bliss. What is it which sets Paul in motion? It is the impulse,—the master-impulse of Hebraism,—the desire for righteousness. “I exercise myself,” he told Felix, “to have a conscience void of offence towards God and men continually.” The end and aim of all religion, access to God, the sense of harmony with the universal order, the partaking of the divine nature,—that our faith and hope might be in God,—that we might have life and have it abundantly,—meant for the Hebrew, access to the source of the moral order in especial, and harmony with it. It was the greatness of the Hebrew race that it felt the authority of this order, its preciousness, its beneficence, so strongly. “How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God!” “The law of thy mouth is better than thousands of gold and silver.” “My soul is consumed with the fervent desire that it hath alway unto thy judgments.” It was the greatness of their best individuals that in them this feeling was incessantly urgent to prove in the only sure manner,—in action, “Blessed are they who hear the word of God and *keep it.*” “If thou wouldest enter into life, *keep the commandments.*” “Let no man deceive you, he that *doeth* righteousness is righteous.” What distinguishes Paul is both his conviction that the commandment is holy, and just, and good; and also his desire to give effect to the commandment, to establish it. It was this which gave to his endeavor after a clear conscience such meaning and efficacy. It was this which gave him

insight to see that there could be no radical difference, in respect of salvation, and the way to it, between Jew and Gentile. "Upon every soul of man that *worketh evil*, whosoever he may be, tribulation and anguish ; to every one that *worketh good*, glory, honor, and peace.

St. Paul's practical religious sense, joined to his strong intellectual power, enabled him to discern and follow the range of the commandment, both as to man's actions and as to his heart and thoughts, with extroardinary force and closeness. His religion had a preponderantly mystic side, and nothing is so natural to the mystic as, in rich single words, such as faith, light, love, to snm up and take for granted, without specially enumerating them, all good moral principles and habits. Yet nothing is more remarkable in Paul than the frequent, nay, incessant lists, in the most particular detail, of moral habits to be pursued or avoided. The more one studies these lists, the more does their significance come out: for instance, that of "things which are not convenient,"* or that of the fruits of the spirit.† The man who wrote with all this searching minuteness knew accurately what he meant by sin and righteousness, and did not use these words at random. His dilligent comprehensiveness in his plan of duties is only less admirable than his diligent sincerity. The sterner virtues and the gentler—his conscience will not let him rest till he

* Envy, murder, captiousness, &c. Rom. i. 29-32.

† Love, joy, self-control, &c. Gal. v. 22-23.

has embraced them all. In his deep resolve "to make out by actual trial what is that good and perfect and acceptable will of God," he goes back upon himself again and again, he makes a duty at every point of our nature, and at points the most opposite, for fear he should by possibility be leaving behind him some weakness still indulged, some subtle promptings to evil not yet brought into captivity.

Most men have the defects, as the saying is, of their qualities ; because they are ardent and severe they have no sense for gentleness and sweetness ; because they are sweet and gentle, they have no sense for severity and ardor. But with Paul, the very same fullness of moral nature which made him an ardent Pharisee, "as concerning zeal, persecuting the church, touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless," was so large that it carried him out of Pharisaism and beyond it, when once he found how much needed doing in him which Pharisaism could not do. Two things are strikingly conspicuous : one, the earnest insistence with which he recommends "bowels of mercies," as he calls them, meekness, humbleness of mind, gentleness, unwearying forbearance, crowned all of them with that emotion of charity "which is the bond of perfectness ;" the other, the force with which he dwells on the solidarity (to use a modern phrase) of man,—the joint interest, that is, which binds humanity together, the duty of respecting every one's part in life,

and of doing justice to his efforts to fulfill that part. Never surely did such a controversialist, such a master of sarcasm and invective, commend, with such manifest sincerity and such persuasive emotion, the qualities of meekness and gentleness! Never surely did a worker, who took with such energy his own line, and who was so born to preponderate and predominate in whatever line he took, insist so often and so admirably that the lines of other workers were just as good as his own! At no time, perhaps, did Paul arrive at practicing quite perfectly what he thus preached; but this only sets in a stronger light the thorough love of righteousness, which made him seek out, and put so prominently forward, and so strive to make himself and others fulfil, parts of righteousness which do not force themselves on the common conscience like the duties of soberness, temperance and activity, and which were somewhat alien, certainly, to his own particular nature. Therefore we cannot but believe that into this spirit, so possessed with the hunger and thirst for righteousness, and precisely because it was so possessed by it, the characteristic doctrines of Christ, which brought a new aliment to feed this hunger and thirst,—of Christ whom, except in vision he had never seen, but who was in every one's words and thoughts, the teacher who was meek and lowly in heart, who said men were brothers and must love one another, that the last should often be first, that the exercise of dominion and lordship had nothing

in them desirable, and that we must become as little children,—sank down and worked there even before Paul ceased to persecute, and had no small part in getting him ready for the crisis of his conversion.

Such doctrines offered new fields of righteousness to the eyes of this indefatigable explorer of it, and enlarged the domain of duty of which Pharisaism showed him only a portion. Then, after the satisfaction thus given to his desire for a full conception of righteousness, came Christ's injunctions to make clean the inside as well as the outside, to beware of the least leaven of hypocrisy and self-flattery, of saying and not doing; and finally the injunction to feel, after doing all we can, that, as compared with the standard of perfection, we are still unprofitable servants. These teachings were, to a man like Paul, for the practice of righteousness, what the others were for the theory; sympathetic utterances, which made the inmost chords of his being vibrate, and which irresistably drew him sooner or later towards their utterer. Need it be said that he never forgot them, and that in all his pages they have left their trace? It is even affecting to see, how, when he is driven for the very sake of righteousness to put the law of righteousness in the second place, and to seek outside the law itself for a power to fulfill the law, how, I say, he returns again and again to the elucidation of his one sole design in all his doing; how he labors to prevent all possibility of misunderstanding, and to

show that he is only leaving the moral law for a moment in order to establish it forever more victoriously. What earnestness and pathos in the assurance : "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily, righteousness should have been by the law!" "Do I condemn the law?" he keeps saying ; "do I forget that the commandment is holy, just and good ! Because we are no longer under the law, are we to sin? Am I seeking to make the course of my life and yours other than a service and an obedience?" To such a character, circumcision is nothing, dogmatics are nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.

But to serve God, to follow that central clue in our moral being which unites us to the universal order, is no easy task. In some way or other, every man is conscious of an opposition in him between the flesh and the spirit.* The lusts of the flesh, the law in our members, inordinate affection, take naturally no account of anything but themselves ; this arbitrary and unregulated action of theirs can produce only confusion and misery. The spirit, the law of our mind, takes account of the universal moral order, the will of God, and is indeed the voice of that order expressing itself in us. Paul talks of a man sowing to *his* flesh, because each of us has of

* "We please our fancy with ideal webs
Of innovation, but our life meanwhile
Is in the loom, where busy passion plies
The shuttle to and fro, and gives our deeds
The accustomed pattern."

Or as the Latin poet has been translated :

"We see the right and we approve it too;
We see the wrong and yet the wrong pursue."

his own this individual body, this congeries of flesh and bones, blood and nerves, different from that of every one else, and with desires and impulses driving each of us his own separate way ; and he says that a man who sows to this, sows to a thousand tyrants, and can reap no worthy harvest. But he talks of sowing to *the spirit* ; because there is one central moral tendency which for us and for all men is the law of our being, and through reason and righteousness we move in this universal order and with it. In this conformity to *the will of God*, as we religiously name the moral order, is our peace and happiness.

But how to find the energy and power to bring all those self-seeking tendencies of the flesh, those multitudinous, swarming, eager, and incessant impulses, into obedience to the central tendency ? Mere commanding and forbidding is of no avail, and only irritates opposition in the desires it tries to control. It even enlarges their power, because it makes us feel our impotence ; and the confusion caused by their ungoverned working is increased by our being filled by a deepened sense of disharmony, remorse and dismay. “I was alive without the law once,” says Paul ; the natural play of all the forces and desires in me went on smoothly enough so long as I did not attempt to introduce order and regulation among them. But the condition of immoral tranquility could not in man be permanent. That natural law of reason and conscience which all men

have, was sufficient by itself to produce a consciousness of rebellion and disquietude. Matters became only worse by the exhibition of the Mosaic law, the offspring of a moral sense more poignant and stricter, however little it might show of subtle insight and delicacy, than the moral sense of the mass of mankind. The very stringency of the Mosaic code increased the feeling of dismay and helplessness ; it set forth the law of righteousness more authoritatively and minutely, yet did not supply any sufficient power to keep it. Neither the law of nature, therefore, nor the law of Moses, availed to bind men to righteousness. So we come to the word which is the governing word of the Epistle to the Romans,—the word *all*. The Gentile with the law of nature, the Jew with the law of Moses, alike fail to achieve righteousness. “*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.*” All do what they would not, and do not what they would ; all feel themselves enslaved, impotent, guilty, miserable. “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death !”

XI.

"CONVERSION TO CHRIST."

Recognition of certain phenomena requires no great metaphysical acumen. We do not care to question Constantine's averment to Eusebins that he saw in the sky a cross inscribed "*In hoc signo vinces.*" Swedenborg's consciousness of the Stockholm conflagration, hundreds of miles away, is too well attested to be doubted. As to Joan de Arc's "call," and some other alleged cases of "second sight," mysteries is a better name for them than absurdities.* Ought one who has always been so healthy and sound as never to have had any dreams, to deny the experience in others, however excusable he may be for not comprehending it? The movements of the somnambulist, the flight of a bat between the interstrung wires of a dark room,—shall we, when unable to affirm the possibility of a sixth sense, deny preternatural mental action altogether?

* "Second-sight" is a flag over disputed ground. But it is matter of knowledge that there are persons whose yearnings, conceptions,—nay, traveled conclusions—continually take the form of images which have a foreshadowing power: the deed they would do starts up before them in complete shape, making a coercive type; the event they hunger for or dread rises into vision with a reed-like growth, feeding itself fast on unnumbered impressions. They are not always the less capable of the argumentative process, nor less sane than the common-place calculators of the market. Sometimes it may be that their natures have manifold openings, like the hundred-gated Thebes, where there may naturally be a greater and more miscellaneous inrush than through a narrow beadle-watched portal.—GEO. ELLIOT.

The old saying that “sin deserves delirium,” is not bad philosophy, especially if we accept the phrenologist’s definition, namely, “sin is the abuse of any faculty or propensity.”

Now the conversion of St. Paul is in itself an incident of precisely the same order as the conversion of Sampson Staniforth, a Methodist soldier in the campaign of Fontenoy. Staniforth himself relates his conversion as follows, in words which bear plainly marked on them the very stamp of good faith :

“ From twelve at night until two, it was my turn to stand sentinel at a dangerous post. I had a fellow sentinel, but I desired him to go away, which he willingly did. As soon as I was alone, I knelt down and determined not to rise but to continue crying and wrestling with God till he had mercy on me. How long I was in that agony I cannot tell ; but as I looked up to heaven I saw the clouds open exceeding bright, and I saw Jesus hanging on the cross. At the same moment these words were applied to my heart ‘ Thy sins are forgiven thee.’ All guilt was gone, and my soul was filled with unutterable peace ; the fear of death and hell was vanished away. I was filled with wonder and astonishment. I closed my eyes, but the impression was still the same ; and for about ten weeks, while I was awake, let me be where I would, the same appearance was still before my eyes, and the same impression upon my heart, *Thy sins are forgiven thee.*”

Not the narrative in the Acts, of Paul's journey to Damascus, could more convince us of its own honesty. But this honesty makes nothing, as every one will admit, for the scientific truth of any scheme of doctrine propounded by Sampson Staniforth, which must prove itself and its own scientific value before science can admit it. Precisely the same is it with Paul's doctrine; it relies on facts of experience, and he asserts nothing which science cannot verify.*

We left Paul in collision with a fact of human nature, but in itself a sterile fact, on which it is possible to dwell too long,—the sense of sin; for sin is not a monster to be mused on, but an impotence to be got rid of. All thinking about it, beyond what is indispensable for the firm effort to get rid of it, is waste of energy and waste of time. We then enter that element of morbid and subjective brooding, in which so many have perished. No Hebrew prophet or psalmist felt what sin was more powerfully than Paul. “Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head, therefore my heart faileth me.” *They are more than the hairs of my head.* The motions of what Paul calls “the law in our members” are indeed a hydra-brood; when we are working against one fault, a dozen others crop out without our expecting it; and this it is which drives the man who deals seriously with himself to difficulty, nay, to

*See “St. Paul and Protestantism,” already cited; also Paley’s *Horæ Paulinæ*.

despair. Paul did not need James to tell him that whoever offends in one point is guilty of all ; he knew it himself, and the unrest this knowledge gave him was his very starting-point. He knew, too, that nothing outward, no satisfaction of all the requirements men may make upon us, no privileges of any sort, can give peace of conscience ;—of conscience, “whose praise is not of men but of God.” He knew, also, that the law of the moral order stretches beyond us and our private conscience, is independent of our sense of having kept it, and stands absolute and what in itself it is ; even, therefore, though I may know nothing against myself, yet this is not enough, I may still not be just. Finally, Paul knew that merely to know all this and say it, is of no use, advances us nothing ; “the kingdom of God is not in word but in power.”

We have remarked that the Hebrew’s first and deepest conception of God, was, as the source of the moral order. But God is also to the Hebrew, “our rock, which is higher than we,” the power by which we have been “upheld ever since we were born,” that has “fashioned us and laid his hand upon us” and envelops us on every side, that has “made us fearfully and wonderfully,” and whose “mercy is over all his works.” In his speech at Athens, and in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, Paul shows how full he too was of this feeling. This element in which we live and move and have our being, which stretches around and beyond

the strictly moral element in us, around and beyond the finite sphere of what is originated, measured, and controlled by our own understanding and will,—this infinite element is very present to Paul's thoughts, and makes a profound impression on them. By this element we are receptive and influenced, not originative and influencing; now, we all of us receive far more than we originate. Our pleasure from a spring day we do not make; our pleasure even from an approving conscience we do not make. And yet we feel that both the one pleasure and the other can, and often do, work with us in a wonderful way for our good. So we get the thought of an impulsion outside ourselves which is at once awful and beneficent. "No man," as the Hebrew psalm says, "hath quickened his own soul." "I know," says Jeremiah, "that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Most true and natural is this feeling; and the greater men are, the more natural is this feeling to them.

The voluntary, rational, and human world, of moral choice, effort, filled the first place in Paul's spirit. The necessary, mystical, and divine world, of influence, sympathy, emotion, filled the second; and he could pass naturally from the one world to the other. The presence in Paul of this twofold feeling acted irresistibly upon his doctrine. What he calls "the power that worketh in us," and that produces results transcending all our expectations and calcu-

lations, he instinctively sought to combine with our personal agencies of reason and conscience. Of such a mysterious power and its operation some clear notion may be got by anybody who has even had any overpowering attachment, or has been in love. A timid man then shows courage, an indolent man diligence. “I seek,” says Paul, “to apprehend that for which I am apprehended by Christ.” And this for which he is thus apprehended is *the righteousness of God*; not an incomplete and maimed righteousness, not a partial and unsatisfying establishment of the law of the spirit, dominant today, deposed tomorrow, effective at one or two points, failing in a hundred; no, but an entire conformity at all points with the divine moral order, the will of God, and, in consequence, a sense of harmony with this order, of acceptance with God. For attaining this, Paul saw no such impotence existing in Christ’s case as in his own. For Christ, the uncertain conflict between the law in our members and the law of the spirit did not appear to exist. Those eternal vicissitudes of victory and defeat, which drove Paul to despair, in Christ were absent; smoothly and inevitably he followed the real and eternal order in preference to the momentary and apparent order. Obstacles outside him there were plenty, but obstacles within him there were none. He was led by the spirit of God; he was dead to sin, he lived to God; and in this life to God he persevered even to the cruel bodily death of the cross.

As many as are led by the spirit of God, says Paul, are the sons of God. If this is so with even us, who live to God so feebly and who render such imperfect obedience, how much more is he who lives to God entirely and who renders an unalterable obedience, the unique and only Son of God?

The Jewish theological doctrine respecting the eternal word or wisdom of God, which was with God from the beginning before the oldest of his works, and through which the world was created, this doctrine which appears in the Book of Proverbs* and again in the Book of Wisdom,† Paul applied to Christ.‡ But this was secondary, and not an original part of his system, much less the ground of it. This was John's starting-point; but Paul's concern with Christ is as the clew to righteousness, not as the clew to transcendental ontology:

Much more visible and important than his identification of Christ with the divine hypostasis known as the Logos, is Paul's identification of him with the Messiah. Ever present is his recognition of him as the Messiah to whom all the law and prophets pointed, of whom the heart of the Jewish race was full, and on whom the Jewish instructors of Paul's youth had dwelt abundantly. That Christ was the divine Logos, or that he was the Jewish Messiah, science can neither deny nor affirm; but that he was the fulfillment of the righteousness of God was apparent in the Gospel-history, and is the scientific

* Prov. viii. 22-9. † Wisd. vii. 25-7. ‡ Col. i. 15-17.

result of that history. Of Christ's life and death, the all-importance for us, according to Paul, is that by means of them, “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly;” should be enabled to “bear fruit to God” in “love, joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control.” Of Christ's life and death the scope was “to redeem us from all iniquity, and make us purely jealous for good works.” Paul adds, that we are to live thus in the actual world which now is, “with the expectation of the appearing of the glory of God and Christ.” By nature and habit, and with his full belief that the end of the world was nigh at hand, Paul used these words to mean a Messianic coming and kingdom. Later Christianity has transformed them as it has transformed so much else of Paul's, to a life beyond the grave, but it has by no means spiritualized them. Paul, as his spiritual growth advanced, spiritualized them more and more; he came to think, in using them, more and more of a gradual, inward transformation of the world by a conformity like Christ's to the will of God, than a Messianic advent. Yet, even then they are always second with him, and not first; the essence of saving grace is always to make us more righteous, to bring us into conformity with the divine law, to enable us to “bear fruit to God.”

“Christ gave himself for us that he might redeem us from iniquity.” First of all, he rendered an

unbroken obedience to the law of the spirit; he served the spirit of God; he came, not to do his own will, but the will of God. Now, the law of the spirit makes men one; it is only by the law in our members that we are many. Secondly, therefore, Christ had an unfailing sense of what we have called, using an expressive modern term, the *solidarity* of men; that it was not God's will that one of his human creatures, should perish. Thirdly, Christ ~~perceived in~~ presumed on this uninterrupted obedience to the law of the Spirit, in this unfailing sense of human solidarity, even to the death; though everything befell him which might break the one or tire the other. Lastly, he had in himself, in all he said and did, that infallible force of attraction which doubled the virtue of everything said and done by him.

XII.

PAUL ON "FAITH" AND "RESURRECTION."

But right here, perhaps you would caution me not to ignore the covenant alleged by Milton and others to have been passed at a Trinity-council, a prose paraphrase whereof may be: It is agreed between God and the mediator Jesus Christ the Son of God, surety for the redeemed, as parties-contractors, that the sins of the redeemed should be imputed to innocent Christ, and he both condemned and put to death for them upon this very condition, that whosoever heartily consents unto the covenant of reconciliation offered through Christ shall, by the imputation of his obedience unto them, be justified and holden righteous before God." But I deem this doctrine as much a human development from the text, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," as the doctrine of priestly absolution is a human development from the text, "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them," or the doctrine of the real presence from the text, "Take, eat, this is my body."

Dr. Townsend * has remarked that "Conversion is not a question of smiles or tears, of sunshine or clouds. It is not a question of this or that emotion

* "Credo," p. 241.

or feeling, any more than it is one of time or place. It is a simple change of character, through a divine agency, induced by religious motives without regard to the time or manner of its accomplishment." Let us resume Paul's idea of redemption.

If ever there was a case in which the wonder-working power of attachment, in a man for whom the moral sympathies and the desire of righteousness were all-powerful, might employ itself and work its wonders, it was here. Paul felt this power penetrate him; and he felt, also, how by perfectly identifying himself through it with Christ, and in no other way, could he ever get the confidence and the force to do as Christ did. He thus found a point in which the mighty world outside man, and the weak world inside him, seemed to combine for his salvation. The struggling stream of duty, which had not volume enough to bear him to his goal, was suddenly reinforced by the immense tidal wave of sympathy and emotion.*

To this new and potent influence Paul gave the name of *faith*. More fully he calls it "Faith that worketh *through love*." The word *faith* points, no doubt, to "coming by hearing," and has possibly a reminiscence, for Paul, of his not having with his own waking eyes, like the original disciples, seen Christ, and of his special mission being to Gentiles who had not seen Christ either. But the essential meaning of the word is "power of holding

* See "St. Paul and Protestantism," already cited at page 56.

on to the unseen," "fidelity." Other attachments demand fidelity in absence of an object which, at some time or other, nevertheless has been seen; this attachment demands fidelity to an object which both is absent and has never been seen by us. It is rightly called not constancy, but faith; a power, preeminently, of *fast attachment to an unseen power of goodness.* "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus," says Paul, "freed me from the law of sin and death." This is what is done for us by *faith.* In his tendency to Judaize, however, Paul still often uses the term in its general sense. It was written of the founder of Israel, Abraham, that he *believed* God and it was counted to him for righteousness; the prophet Habakkuk had the famous text: "The just shall live by faith." Christ, too, had used and sanctioned the use of the word *faith* to signify cleaving to the unseen God's power of goodness as shown in Christ. Peter and John and the other apostles habitually used the word in the same sense, with the modification introduced by Christ's departure. This was enough to make Paul retain for that vital operation, which was the heart of his whole religious system, the name of *faith*, though he had considerably developed and enlarged the name's usual meaning. To the elemental power of sympathy and emotion in us Paul assigns but one unalterable object: *to die with Christ to the law of the flesh, to live with Christ to the law of the mind.* "If any man be in Christ," said Paul,—that is, if

any man identifies himself with Christ by attachment so that he enters into his feelings and lives with his life,—“he is a new creature;” he can do, and does, what Christ did. All impulses of selfishness conflict with Christ’s feelings, he showed it by dying to them all ; if you are one with him by faith and sympathy, you can die to them also. And if you thus die with him, you become transformed by the renewing of your mind, and rise with him. The law of the spirit of life which is in Christ becomes the law of your life also, and frees you from the law of sin and death. You rise with him to that harmonious conformity with the real and eternal order, that sense of pleasing God who trieth the hearts, which is life and peace, and which grows more and more till it becomes glory. If you suffer with him therefore, you shall also be glorified with him.

Furthermore, Christ’s life, with which we by faith identify ourselves, is not complete, his aspiration with the eternal order is not satisfied, so long as only Christ himself follows this order, or only this or that individual amongst us follows it. The same law of emotion and sympathy, therefore, which prevails in our inward self-discipline, is to prevail in our dealings with others. If my neighbor is merely an extension of myself, deceiving my neighbor is the same as deceiving myself. “Speak every man truth to his neighbor,” says Paul, “*for* we are members one of another.”

In Paul’s ideas, then, the expression *resurrection*

from the dead has no essential connection with physical death. While it cannot be denied that in his earlier theology, the physical and miraculous aspect of the resurrection, both Christ's and the believer's, is predominant, his conception of life and death inevitably came to govern his conception of the resurrection. "If ye then be risen with Christ," says he to the Colossians, "seek the things that are above." And he tells the Romans that real life begins with the mystical death which frees us from the *shalls* and *shall-nots* of the law.* The resurrection Paul was striving after for himself and others was one *now* and to *righteousness*; the putting on of the new man.

But the Christian needs to find in Christ's dying to sin a fellowship of suffering and conformity to death; this he touches in Christ's crucifixion,—here only can we see, in Christ, place for struggle and weakness. The believer is crucified with Christ when he mortifies by the spirit the deeds of righteousness; Christ was crucified when he came not to do his own will but God's.

Even in this life, we are "seated in heavenly places," as Christ is; so entirely, for Paul, is righteousness the true life and the true heaven. At our physical death, however, we quit the ground of experience and enter upon the ground of hope. But, by a sublime analogy, he fetches from the travail of the whole universe proof of the necessity and benefi-

* Rom. vii. 1-6.

cence of the law of transformation. Christ entered into his glory when he had made his physical death itself a crowning witness to his obedience to righteousness ; we, in like manner, within the limits of this earthly life and before we have yet persevered to the end, must not look for full adoption, for the glorious revelation in us of the sons of God.

Very naturally, then might Paul affirm that peace with God through Christ inspires such an abounding sense of gratitude, and of its not being our work, that we can only speak of ourselves as *called* and *chosen* to it. But here, again is disclosed Paul's tendency to Judaize, in the use of a stock theological figure,—that of the clay and the potter,—adopted by Isaiah, Jeremiah and the son of Sirach. But this was only secondary to his main point: “God is the saviour of all men, especially of those that believe.”

In the Epistle to the Hebrews appears a different view of the death of Christ, namely, as analogous to the Jewish system of sacrifices. Luther's conjecture which ascribes that epistle to Apollos, derives corroboration from one account of Apollos which we have; that “he was an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures.” In the author of that epistle, the powers of combining, type-finding, and expounding seem somewhat to have dominated the religious perceptions. What the true expiation was is well stated in the first epistle of St. Paul. Christ has to step between us foolish transgressors and the de-

structive natural consequences of our transgression, and, by a super-human example, a spending himself without stint, a more than mortal scale of justice and purity, to save the ideal of human life and conduct from the deterioration with which men's ordinary practice threatens it. In this way Christ truly "became for our sakes poor, though he was rich," he was truly "bruised for our iniquities," he "suffered in our behalf," "bare the sin of many," and "made intercession for the transgressors;" in this way, he was "sacrificed as a blameless lamb to redeem us from the vain conversation which had become our second nature;" in this way, he who knew no sin "was made to be sin for us."

XIII.

“EXPERIENCING RELIGION.”

One would suppose from the manner in which some preachers exhort us to “Have Faith!” that they mean, “Have Credulity!” We have seen what was Paul’s maturer idea thereof based on his religious experience. We had once referred to religion “in its wide sense of piety and goodness.” This, however, does not reach the gist of some modern exhortations to “Get Religion!”

But what is the *object* of religion? Condition, conduct. Now rightness of conduct is the simplest thing in the world so far as *understanding* is concerned; but as regards *doing*, it is the hardest thing in the world. Hence, instead of facing the latter, men have preferred to occupy themselves with abstruse disquisitions on the former, the origin of conscience, &c. Conduct is three-fourths of life; indeed, what of knowledge, art, &c., does not concern conduct may safely be called much less than one-fourth.*

Religion differs from morality in degree. Religion is morality touched by emotion. For instance, when Cicero says: “Hold off from sensuality; for, if you have given yourself up to it, you will find

* see “Literature and Dogma,” already cited on page 32.

yourself unable to think of anything else!” this is morality. But when Jesus says; “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God!” this is religion. “Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty!” is morality. “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work!” is religion. So also is the aspiration of Sophocles; “O that my lot might lead me in the path of holy innocence of thought and deed, the path which august laws ordain, laws which in the highest heaven had their birth, neither did the race of mortal man beget them, nor shall oblivion ever put them to sleep; the power of God is mighty in them and groweth not old.”

How is this application of emotion to morality made? Only by attending to any matter does one get to feel much about it. Only by habitually dwelling on conduct, does the mind arrive at rules determining the control of the impulses of the animal instincts. Thus it was that the Hebrew nation attained the idea of an eternal power not ourselves that makes for righteousness. This consciousness came from experience, in the plain region of conduct; not, as metaphysicians assert, from Israel’s having his head full of the necessity of a first cause. “The fear of the eternal,” he is always telling us, “that is wisdom; and to depart from evil that is understanding. Happy is the man that findeth wisdom.” “The Eternal by wisdom hath founded the earth, by understanding hath he established the

heavens." He comes to consider God a father, because the power in and around us which makes for righteousness, is best described by the name of this authoritative and tender relation. So, too, with the intense fear and abhorrence of idolatry. Conduct, righteousness, is, above all, an inward motion and rule; no sensible forms can represent it or help us to it. So, too, with the sense of the oneness of God. "The Lord our God is one Lord;" He has not frail man's many-sidedness. "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee; turn not to the right hand nor to the left; remove thy foot from evil!"

Now, the word "God" literally signifies brilliance. It is used, however, in most cases as by no means a term of science, or exact knowledge, but a term of poetry and eloquence; a term thrown out, so to speak, at a not fully grasped object of the speaker's consciousness; and mankind mean different things by it as their consciousness differs. The most exact scientific definition of a thing is not always the best aid to our conception of its character. Geographers call the earth an oblate spheroid. But Wordsworth's expression, "the mighty mother of mankind," is more adequate to convey what men feel about the earth. When Paul says our business is "to serve the spirit of God," "to serve the living and true God," and when Epictetus says, "What do I want? to acquaint myself with the true order of things and comply with it,"—they both mean, so

far, the same, in that they both mean we should obey a tendency, which is *not ourselves*, but which appears in our consciousness, by which things fulfill the real law of their being. And Israel's fundamental idea was “righteousness tendeth to life, and he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death.”

But, as Goethe has remarked, “man never knows how anthropomorphic he is.” This *not ourselves* of which Israel is thankfully conscious, he inevitably speaks of and speaks to as a man. As time proceeds, imagination and reasoning keep working upon this substructure, and build from it a manifold and non-natural man. Attention is then drawn, afterwards, to causes outside of ourselves which seem to make for sin and suffering; and then either these causes have to be reconciled by some highly ingenious scheme with the magnified and non-natural man's power, or a second magnified and non-natural man has to be supposed who pulls the contrary way to the first. So arise Satan and his angels. But all this is secondary, and comes much later; Israel began with experience.

The prophets themselves, speaking when the ruin of their country was impending, or soon after it had happened, had had in prospect the actual restoration of Jerusalem, the submission of the nations around, and the empire of David and Solomon renewed. But as time went on, and Israel's return from captivity and resettlement of Jerusalem by no means answered his glowing anticipations from them, these

anticipations had more and more a construction put upon them which set at defiance the unworthiness and infelicities of the actual present, which filled up what prophecy left in outline, and which embraced the world. The Hebrew Amos, of the eighth century before Christ, promises to his hearers a recovery from their ruin, in which they shall possess the remnant of Edom: the Greek Amos of the Christian era, whose words St. James produces in the conference at Jerusalem, promises a recovery for Israel in which the residue of men shall seek the Eternal. This is but a specimen of what went forward on a large scale. The redeemer, whom the unknown prophet of the captivity foretold to Zion, has, a few hundred years later, for the writer whom we call Daniel and for his contemporaries, become the miraculous agent of Israel's new restoration, the heaven-sent executor of the Eternal's judgment, and the bringer-in of the kingdom of righteousness; the Messiah, in short, of our popular religion. "One like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that peoples, nations and languages should serve him; and the kingdom and dominion shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." An impartial criticism will hardly find in the Old Testament writers before the times of the Maccabees the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, or the resurrection of the dead. But by the time of the Macca-

bees, when this passage of the book of Daniel was written, in the second century before Christ, the Jews have undoubtedly become familiar, not indeed with the idea of the immortality of the soul as philosophers like Plato conceived it, but with the notion of the resurrection of the dead to take their trial for acceptance or rejection in the Messiah's judgment and kingdom.

To this has swelled Israel's original and fruitful thesis: “Righteousness tendeth to life! as the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more, but the righteous is an everlasting foundation.” The phantasmagories of more prodigal and wild imaginations have mingled with the work of Israel's austere spirit; Babylon, Persia, Egypt and Greece have left their trace there; but the unchangeable substructure is everything built which comes after.

In one sense, the lofty Messianic ideas of “the day of the Eternal's coming,” the consolation of Israel,” “the restitution of all things,” are even more important than the solid but humbler idea, “Righteousness tendeth to life,” out of which they arose; in another sense they are much less important. They are more important, because they are the development of this idea and prove its strength. It might have been crushed and baffled by the falsification events seemed to delight in giving it; that instead of being crushed and baffled, it took this magnificent flight, shows its innate power. And they also in a wonderful manner attract emotion to the ideas

of conduct and morality, attract it to them and combine it with them. On the other hand, the idea that "righteousness tendeth to life" has a firm, experimental ground, which the Messianic ideas have not. And the day comes when the possession of such a ground is invaluable.

That the spirit of man should entertain hopes and anticipations beyond what it actually knows and can verify is quite natural. Human life could not have the scope, and depth, and progress it has, were this otherwise. It is natural, too, to make these hopes and anticipations give in their turn support to the simple and humble experience which was their original ground. Israel, therefore, who originally followed righteousness because he felt that it tended to life, might come at last to follow it because it would enable him to stand before the Son of Man at his coming, and to share in the triumph of the saints.

But this later belief has not the same character as the belief which it is thus set to confirm. It is a kind of fairy-tale, which a man tells himself, which no one, we grant, can prove impossible to turn out true, but which no one, also, can prove certain to turn out true. As Goethe has said, "extra-belief," (*der Aberglaube*,) —that which we hope, augur, imagine—"is the poetry of life," and has the rights of poetry. But it is not science; and yet it tends always to imagine itself science, to substitute itself for science, to make itself the ground of the very science out of which it has grown.

XIV.

PROPHECY AND RHAPSODY.

Such then, as years rolled on, was the depreciation of the emotive element, and by the time of Christ “the whole head was sick and the whole heart faint.” And now the thing was, by giving a fuller idea of righteousness, to reapply emotion to it, and thereby to disperse the feeling of being amiss and helpless, to give the sense of being right and effective; to restore, in short, to righteousness the sanction of *happiness*. But this could only be done by attending to that inward world of feelings and dispositions which Judaism had too much neglected. The first need, therefore, for Israel at that time, was to make religion cease to be mainly a national and social matter, and become mainly a personal matter. “Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first the *inside* of the cup, that the outside may be clean also!”—this was the very ground principle in Christ’s teaching.

Christ’s new and different way of putting things was the secret of his succeeding where the prophets could not. This new way was expressed by St. James as *epieikeia*, sweet-reasonableness, balance, mild temper. That which has an air of truth and likelihood is prepossessing. Now, never were utterances concerning conduct and righteousness—Is-

rael's master-concern, and the master topic of the New Testament as well as the Old—which so carried with them an air of consummate truth and likelihood as Christ's did; and never, therefore, were any utterances so irresistably prepossessing.* He put things in such a way that his hearer was led to take each rule or fact of conduct by its inward side, its effect on the heart and character; then the reason of the thing, the meaning of what had been mere matter of blind rule, flashed upon him. He could distinguish between what was only ceremony, and what was *conduct*; and the hardest rule of conduct came to appear to him infinitely reasonable and therefore infinitely prepossessing. *To find his own soul*, his true and permanent self, became set up in man's view as his chief concern, as the secret of happiness; and so it really is. “How is a man advantaged if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of *himself?*” was the searching question which Jesus made men ask themselves. He made his followers feel that they had a best and real self as opposed to their ordinary and apparent one, and that their happiness depended on saving this best self from being overborne. And then by recommending and still more by himself exemplifying in his own practice by the exhibition in himself with the most prepossessing pureness, clearness, and

* “In this frail and corrupt world we sometimes meet persons who in their very mien and aspect, as well as in the whole habit of life, manifest such a signature and stamp of virtue as to make our judgment of them a matter of intuition rather than the result of continued examination.”—ALEXANDER KNOX: in Southey's Life of Wesley.

beauty of the two qualities by which our ordinary self is indeed most essentially counteracted, *self-renunciation and mildness*, he made his followers feel that in these qualities lay the secret of their best self; that to attain them was in the highest degree requisite and natural, that a man's whole happiness depended upon it.

It cannot be said that by the suffering Servant of God and by the triumphant Messiah, the prophets themselves meant one and the same person. But language of hope and aspiration such as theirs is in its very nature malleable. Criticism may and must determine what the original speakers seem to have directly meant; but the very nature of their language justifies *any* powerful and fruitful application of it, and every such application may be said, in the words of popular religion, to have been lodged there from the first by the spirit of God. Certainly it was a somewhat violent exegetical proceeding to fuse together into one personage Daniel's Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven, the first Isaiah's "Branch out of the root of Jesse," who should smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and reign in glory, peace, and righteousness, and the second Isaiah's meek and afflicted Servant of God, who was charged with the precious message of a golden future;—to fuse together in one these three by no means identical personages, to add to them the sacrificial lamb of the passover and of the temple-service which was constantly before a Jew's eyes,

to add, besides, the Prophet like to himself whom Moses promised to the children of Israel, to add, further, the Holy One of Israel the Redeemer, who for the prophets was the Eternal himself; and to say, that the combination thence resulting was the Messiah or Christ whom all the prophets meant and predicted, and that Jesus was this Messiah. To us, who have been fashioned by a theology whose set purpose is to efface all the difficulties in such a combination, and to make it received easily and unhesitatingly, it may appear natural ; in itself, and with the elements of which it is composed viewed singly and impartially, it cannot but be declared violent

Instead of “the Root of David who should set up an ensign for the nations and assemble the outcasts of Israel,” Christ took from prophecy and made pre-eminent “the Servant whom man despiseth and the people abhorreth,” but “who bringeth good tidings, who publisheth peace, publisheth salvation.” And instead of saying like the prophets, “This *people* must mend, this *nation* must do so and so, *Israel* must follow such and such ways,” Christ took the individual Israelite by himself apart, made him listen for the voice of his conscience, and said to him in effect, “If every *one* would mend *one*, we should have a new world.”

The workings of later extra-belief are illustrated in an interpretation of Jacob’s death-bed words as that “the sceptre shall not depart from Judah until Shiloh (or the Messiah) come,” &c. The passage

is rightly to be rendered that “the preeminence shall not depart from Judah so long as the people resort to Shiloh (the national sanctuary before Jerusalem was won) ; and the nations (the heathen Cananites) shall obey him.” Jeremiah’s passage as to the “Branch” runs really : “I will raise to David a righteous branch ; in his days Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell safely ; and this is the name whereby they shall call themselves : The Eternal is our righteousness !” Another passage : “The Eternal said unto my lord the king,” is a simple promise of victory to a prince among God’s chosen people. And another : “Kiss the Son !” is, according to the Septuagint, “Lay hold on instruction !”

Again, certain miraculous stories afford an illustration of this tendency. Men’s habits of seeing, sifting and relating are thus described by Shakespeare :

“No natural exhalation in the sky,
No scape of nature, no distempered day,
No common wind, no customed event,
But they will pluck away his natural cause,
And call them meteors, prodigies and signs,
Abortions, presages, and tongues of heaven.”

The story of the miraculous passage of the Pamphylian Sea by the hosts of Alexander the Great is received without considering whether that part of the Mediterranean might not have been depressed by long-continued north winds. The companion of St. Aqninas is believed by many well-meaning persons to have heard a voice from the crucifix to the praying saint : “Thou hast, written well of me, Thomas ; what recompense dost thou desire ?” Our honest be-

lief that Staniforth related in good faith a vision by him of Christ upon the cross does not prevent a belief that some of his opinions on other subjects might be erroneous. So also as to the declarations of St. Peter,* St. John,† and St. James,‡ that the end of all things was in their day impending. So also as to St. Paul's assertion to the Thessalonians that they and he, at the coming of Christ, then supposed to be approaching, should have their turn after and not before the faithful dead, and at once he caught up "in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air."

Sometimes under the hands of the reporters the texture of incidents becomes so loose and floating that we stand momentarily in wonderland. Jesus after his resurrection not known by Mary Magdalene, taken by her for the gardener; not known by the two disciples going with him to Emmaus and at supper with him there; not known by his most intimate apostles on the borders of the sea of Galilee;—and presently, out of these vague beginnings, the recognitions getting asserted, then the ocular demonstrations, the supreme commissions, the ascension;—one hardly knows which of the two to call the most evident here, the perfect simplicity and good faith of the narrators, or the plainness with which they themselves really say to us, Behold a legend growing under your eyes!

* I. Pet., iv. 7. † I. John, ii. 18. ‡ James, v. 8.

XV.

APPREHENDING CHRIST.

Proceed we, then, with three facts distinctly before us: first that the record of Christ's life and words, when we first get it has passed through at least half a century, or more, of oral tradition, and through more than one written account; second, that it is impossible for us to know accurately the history of the documents, and even if it were possible, we should yet not know accurately what Jesus said and did, for his reportors were incapable of rendering it, he was so much above them; and third, that he spoke in Aramaic, the most concrete and unmetaphysical of languages but he is reported in Greek, the most metaphysical. Still we may trace approximately and satisfactorily what he actually did say and do to restore from the obscurations of this materializing extra-belief Israel's original intuition, that "the Eternal loveth righteousness; to him that ordereth his conversation right shall be shown the salvation of God." His method was introspection, his secret or means was self-renouncement, and his manner was "epieikeia," a something "full of grace and truth."

His method directed the disciple's eye inward and

set his consciousness to work;* and the first thing his consciousness told him was that he had two selves pulling him different ways. When we attend, we find that an impulse to do a thing is really in itself no reason at all why we should do it; because impulses proceed from two sources, quite different, and of quite different degrees of authority. St. Paul contrasts them as the inward man, and the man in our members; the mind of the flesh and the spiritual mind. Jesus contrasts them as *life*, properly so named, and *life in this world*; the former full of light, endurance, felicity, in connection with the higher and permanent self; the latter in connection with the lower and transient self. And the means by which a man may be placed in the former was by dying to the latter. "Whosoever would come after me, let him renounce himself," Let him die as regards his old self, and so live. And this was what Paul meant by bearing about the dying (the *necrosis*) of the Lord Jesus that the *life* also of Jesus may be made manifest in our body." By the "himself" to be renounced—the "old man" to be put off—the life in this world—was meant following those "wishes of the flesh" and of the current thoughts,† which Jesus had, by his method, already put his disciples in the way of sifting and scrutinizing, and

* "The decisive juncture is even before
‘Desire has trimmed the sails and Circumstance
Brings but the breeze to fill them.’"

"When unaverted was David's look at Bathsheba, then unaverted was the assassination of Uriah."

† Eph. ii. 3.

of trying by the standard of conformity to conscience. Accordingly, when Jesus said of himself: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again," he appealed to that happiness which is the experimental sanction of his method and of his secret,—the sense it gives of having the Eternal on our side and approving us. Thus the words "peace through Jesus Christ" would mean peace through this secret of his. But in the extra-belief of our popular theurgy, Christ's being loved by the Father for laying down his life has been materialized into a First Person's approving a Second for standing to a contract passed in a council of a Trinity.

Well might Jesus call the religion of the true Israel "good news to the poor;" for it covers nearly the whole of life and yet is so simple. The only right contrast to set up between faith and reason is, not that faith grasps what is too hard for reason, but that reason does not, like faith, attend to what is at once so great and so simple. The *difficulty* about faith is to *attend* to what is very simple and very important, but liable to be pushed by more showy or tempting matters out of sight; the *marvel* about faith is, that what is so simple should be so all-sufficing, so necessary, and so often neglected. And faith is neither the submission of the reason, nor is it the acceptance, simply and absolutely upon testimony, of what reason cannot reach. Faith is: the being able to cleave to a power of goodness

appealing to our higher and real self, not to our lower or apparent self.*

Nearly eight centuries before Christ, Micah had asked: "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God?" The author of the epistle to the Hebrews* answers: "With the blood of Christ." But without the extra-belief in imputed or proxy merit or sacrificial ceremonies which would characterize "an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures" (so reputed perhaps because eloquently catering to the Time-spirit,) Micah had himself given the only answer verifiable: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Eternal require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

* "The Religion which depends on reverence [*Ehrfurcht*, honor done without fear,] for what is above us we denominate the Ethnical; it is the religion of the nations, and the first happy deliverance from a degrading fear: all Heathen religions as we call them, are of this sort, whatsoever names they may bear. The Second Religion, which finds itself on reverence for what is around us, we denominate the Philosophical; for the philosopher stations himself in the middle, and must draw down to him all that is higher, and up to him all that is lower, and only in this medium condition does he merit the title of Wise. Here, as he surveys with clear sight his relation to his equals, and therefore to the whole human race, his relation likewise to all other earthly circumstances and arrangements necessary or accidental, he alone in a cosmic sense lives in Truth. But now we have to speak of a Third Religion, grounded on reverence for what is beneath us: this we name the Christian, as in the Christian religion such a temper is with most distinctness manifested: it is a last step to which mankind were fitted and destined to attain. But what a task was it, not only to be patient with the Earth, and let it lie beneath us, we appealing to a higher birth-place; but also to recognize humility and poverty, mockery and despite, disgrace and wretchedness, suffering and death, to recognize these things as divine; nay even on sin and crime to look not as hindrances, but to honor and love them as furtherances of what is holy."—GOETHE, in "Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship."

XVI.

GOD.

But what does Micah mean by “thy God?” Evidently something else than a mere magnified and non-natural man. There are many qualities of God not knowable by us. But our idea of him may be true as far as it goes. We can conceive him to be different in kind from the universe; He being infinite, self-subsisting and unchanging. He transcends the world of matter and the world of spirit; and in virtue of that transcendence continually makes the world of matter fairer, and the world of spirit wiser. So there is really a progress in the manifestation of God, although no progress in God.

The infinite God must be complete in the qualities of a perfect being and perfect in the qualities of a complete one. He must have the perfection of being, self-existence; of power, almighty; of mind, all-knowingness; of conscience, all-righteousness; of affection, all-lovingness; of soul, all-holiness, perfect self-fidelity,—consequently the perfection of will, absolute freedom.

The universe consists of the world of matter and the world of spirit. In the world of matter—nature—God must be both perfect cause and perfect providence. As to such cause: God being the undis-

turbed author of all that is in nature, nature represents nothing but his will and purpose. He must have made nature from a perfect motive ; of perfect material ; for a perfect purpose or end ; and as perfect means to achieve that purpose. That motive is absolute love, a desire to confer such form and degree of welfare on each thing as is perfectly consistent with the character of the thing—with its highest form of welfare. A perfect purpose or end is the achievement of that welfare and bliss. Perfect material and means are those which perfectly achieve that purpose—not today, or when the thing wills, but ultimately, when the infinite wisdom and love of God wills. It follows, then, that God, being infinitely wise, just, loving and holy, creates nothing from an evil or imperfect motive, for an evil or imperfect purpose, from an evil or imperfect material, or as evil or imperfect means ; and, consequently, to him, selfishness and destructiveness are absolutely impossible.

And the same holds as to the perfection of God's providence ; for creation and providence are but modifications of the same function. Creation is momentary providence, providence momentary creation ; one a point, the other a line. At creation God must have known the action and history of each thing which he called into being just as well as he knows it now ; for God's knowledge is not a becoming wise by experience, but a being wise by nature. It follows, then, that all things which God has made

have a right to be perfectly provided for. This lien on the infinity of God vests in the substance of their finite nature, and is not voided by any accident of their history, for that accident must have been known and provided for as one of the consequences of their powers. If, then, I am sure of God and his infinity, I am sure beforehand of the ultimate welfare of everything which God has made; the infinite Father is the endorser therefor. God being unchangeably perfect and perfectly unchangeable, his mode of action is constant and universal; nowhere is there an extemporeaneous miracle. Men have their precarious makeshifts; the Infinite has no tricks and subterfuges—not a whim in God, and so, in one regard, not a miracle in Nature. Seeming chance is real direction; what looks like evil in nature is real good. The sparrow that falls today does not fall to ruin but to ultimate welfare. Though we know not the mode of operation, there must be another world for the sparrow as for the man.

In the world of spirit, or man, God is perfect cause and perfect Providence. God knew at the creation all the action and history of the world of man. Human caprice and freedom are a contingent force, but God knows its amount and movements and what it will bring about. There have been and there are, to nations and to individuals, suffering, follies, sins; but these were all foreseen by the infinite wisdom of God, and provided for by his infinite

power and justice, and His infinite love shall bring us all to bliss, not a soul left behind, not a sparrow lost. The means we know not, the end we are sure of. If God is for us who can be against us?*

* See more fully, Theodore Parker's Sermon on "Theism."

XVII.

BENEFIT OF PRAYER, SUBJECTIVE.

But then, observe my reservation: “in one regard, no miracle in nature.” Hume’s declaration that it is contrary to our experience that a miracle take place, is no very absolute denial of miracles. If a miracle be considered merely as a new effect produced by the introduction of a new cause, all that Hume has made out is that, (at least, in the imperfect state of our knowledge of natural agencies, which leaves it always possible that some of the physical antecedents may have been hidden from us,) no evidence can prove a miracle to any one who did not previously believe the existence of a Being with supernatural power; or who believes himself to have full proof that the character of the Being whom he recognizes is inconsistent with His having seen fit to interfere on the occasion in question. Mankind agree with Aristotle in conceding the truth of Agathon’s averment: “It is a part of probability that many improbable things will happen.” A great deal of what passes for likelihood in the world is simply the reflex of a wish. Accordingly, there have been priests who seemed to argue that the dogma of the resuscitation of the Virgin Mary was true because it had been a solace to many pious souls.

The difference between a fool and a philosopher has been said to lie in the fact that the fool is more willing to accept unreal causes of any phenomena than to confess to himself his ignorance of the real ones. Hence the frequency of the fallacy *post hoc* (or *cum hoc*) *ergo propter hoc*; such an event followed, therefore it must have *resulted* from, the antecedent. Hence the silly belief in omens, dream-auguries, and all that ilk. The one instance of a *sequitur* is treasured as a fulfilment; the ninety-nine of *non constat* are consigned to oblivion. And hence the perversion of prayer. Pharisees love to think that the tower of Siloam falls only on "Sinners." Sunday pleasure boats upset; they always do, and none others, forsooth. Not alone Mark Twain's "Innocents Abroad" or inmates of a steamship have witnessed incessant prayers for winds favorable to "our" craft, ignoring the fact that ten-fold vessels—vessels propelled by sails alone—are, at the same time in the same commercial belt, coming in an opposite direction. Prayers, too, by persons professing to love their neighbors as themselves.

Presumptuous is any prayer that assumes to instruct God. Pernicious is the oft-reiterated pulpit assertion that the duty, aim and benefit of prayer is objective. They are subjective. The world has endorsed two proverbs: "what you wish, that you are," and "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." No one absolutely wishes to be submissive,

patient, modest, or liberal who does not become, or, at least tend to become, what he wishes. The man who never by sequestration and contemplation interrupts the giddy whirl of his secular pursuits becomes a groveller. The woman who is forever absorbed in frivolities, becomes inane. The vindictive tribe or individual who delights to imagine that his shoe is being cast out over every vexatious Edom, hurts himself and not Edom; Especially if Edom, like the moon when barked at, "keeps right on." The law of assimilation is immutable. To be Godlike we must meditate upon God. To attain towards his attributes we must aspire to the true, the beautiful and the good. And, as George Elliot has remarked in her "*Daniel Deronda*," "the most powerful movement of feeling with a litnrgy is the prayer which seeks for nothing special, but is a yearning to escape from the limitations of our own weakness, and an invocation of all Good to enter and abide with us; or else a self-oblivious lifting up of gladness, a *Gloria in excelsis* that such Good exists; both the yearning and the exultation gathering their utmost force from the sense of communion in a form which has expressed them both, for long generations of struggling men."

Such persistent aspiration is my definition of prayer. Christ's vivid oriental emphasis meant no more. All his application of the parable of the unjust judge has probably never come down to us. Whoever of his reporters would imply that he ever

affirmed that prayer consists in selfish teasing and impertinence, is not a safe guide.*

One may even commend the objective theory while having in view only the subjective good. The father in La Fontaine's fable, is not deemed disingenuous for directing his sons to keep the heritage and dig for a concealed treasure. The treasure was in the digging and consequent health, harvests, habits of industry; a prosperity which the object directly longed for would have defeated.

The wisdom of all ages and countries concurs in the counsel :

“ Think true and speak as you think;
Intend right and act as you intend:
Feel kind and be as you feel;
Aspire infinitely and grow holy.”

* See APPENDIX “A.”

XVIII.

FASTING.

Again : we should not forget, that the same apostles who appear to recommend prayer and fasting from the teasing or objective standpoint, ever evince that they have the subjective benefit in view. Thus “Pray without ceasing,” is a direction to maintain a habitually humble and prayerful spirit.

“ We seem to live a double life,
Like one in wakeful slumber walking ;
Vacant we join earth’s daily strife,
The heart meanwhile with angels talking :

Above, the stream that all behold,
Acts, words, a restless mingled torrent ;
Below, o’er sands of priceless gold,
Flows meditation’s under-current.

Paul never advised a waste effort at a physical impossibility. So also as to fasting. Pertinent was the Hibernian’s reply to a priest who had commended the example of Simon Stylites : “ If iverybody were pillar-saints, how would the rest get victuals up to them ? ” Our Creator has himself fixed the limit at which we may postpone a meal for meditation,—the nutriment of the body for the nutriment of the soul. The great truth enunciated by the old Hebrew : “ It is better to go to the house

of mourning than to the house of feasting," or by Shakespeare :

"My desolation does begin
To make a better life,"

"the living" may too much "lay to heart."

The Presbytery of Edinburgh, in 1853, petitioned the Queen to appoint a national fast for the extermination of the Asiatic cholera then raging there. The Home Secretary, Lord Palmerston, replied, that the affairs of this world are regulated by natural laws, on the observance or neglect of which the weal or woe of mankind depends; that one of those laws connects disease with the exhalations of bodies; and it is by virtue of this law that contagion spreads, either in crowded cities, or in places where vegetable decomposition is going on; that man, by exerting himself can disperse or neutralize these noxious influences; and the appearance of the cholera proves that he has not exerted himself. Knowing that such a fast would in Scotland be sure to be rigidly kept, and by causing mental depression and physical exhaustion prepare thousands of delicate persons, before twenty-four hours had passed, to receive the deadly poison already lurking around them, he advised the petitioners to employ their time in planning and executing measures for purifying the localities of the poorer classes from those sources of contagion which, if allowed to remain, would "infallibly breed pestilence and be fruitful in death, in spite of all the prayers and fastings of a united but inactive nation."

In a single church at Edinburgh, in 1670, thirty sermons were delivered every week. In 1653, when the sacrament was administered, the Presbyterians, on Wednesday, fasted and listened to prayers and sermons for more than eight hours; on Saturday they heard two or three sermons; on Sunday they stayed in church more than twelve hours; and on Monday, three or four additional sermons were preached by way of Thanksgiving.

Not our Scotch brethren, however, are the only disciples who, on going upon a mount of transfiguration, have proposed to build tabernacles and abide there. But as the Master suggested, we are not created always to remain on those spiritual heights. All that is required is that we be faithful to the pattern shown us up there. Each element of our spiritual nature must have a fair chance. One thought and word must succeed another. Our creator has made the soul's palate crave, no less than the bodily stomach, variety. The *allegro* is all the more pleasing for the *andante*; and conversely "The Last Rose of Summer" is a relief after "Fisher's Hornpipe." Or, (varying the simile a little,) not in music alone has nature decreed canons of counterpoint and succession.

The best mind is that which is the most symmetrically developed. Solomon counted the "scoffer" a fool; but what shall we call the man who has no imitativeness, mirthfullness, destructiveness and language? Dr. Franklin emphasized the importance of

acquisitiveness, constructiveness, concentrativeness and firmness; but what a "worm of the dust" is the creature that has no ideality and versatility! Precious little better is that butterfly embodiment of weakness which assumes to be a *dilettante* critic, loving nothing useful or venerable if not beautiful and exquisite.

The church has its office. But in the alternation of work and recreation no one need be false to his or her highest nature. The soldier or surgeon who is a constant witness of human pain is the most callous. Did those old monks, who prayed and fasted most, have the most human warmth of heart? Not every youth or maiden that occasionally sees visions is to be called a visionary: not every old man or woman who dreams retrospections is to be adjudged *non compos*. But where "spiritual moods," meditations and rhapsodies, instead of being a part of life, become its all,

"That way, madness lies."

XIX.

SIN AND HELL.

But then, I do not propose to attempt any diagnosis of depravity, bent-aside-edness. I too well remember how George Combe was cudgelled by theologians for that chapter in his “Constitution of Man,” entitled “The Hereditary Transmission of Qualities.” I believe with Mr. Beecher, that the race has been working from a lower plane upwards, and not from a higher point downwards. And then, too, George Elliot has recently enunciated a great truth which applies to a myriad others than her self-willed beauty, Gwendolen :

“ Some of the goodness which Rex believed in was there. Goodness is a large, often a prospective word ; like harvest, which, at one stage when we talk of it, lies all under-ground, with an indeterminate future : is the germ prospering in the darkness ? at another, it has put forth delicate green blades, and by-and-by the trembling blossoms are ready to be dashed off by an hour of rough wind or rain. Each stage has its peculiar blight, and may have the healthy life choked out of it by a particular action of the foul land which rears or neighbors it, or by damage brought from foulness afar.”

Do any two persons view “sin” from precisely

the same stand-point? It may be well for a man of clerical, humanitarian, or legal antecedents to compare notes with an eminent medical professor; for his views will be found to corroborate those of any municipal magistrate.*

The tender-hearted Cowper, if serving as a butcher's apprentice, would no doubt often have been judged by his master a "sinner" as to his duties. Had the punctilious Mrs. Opie been one of Washington's aids just before the retreat from Long Island, it isn't pleasant to contemplate the judgment of a court-martial upon her refusal to drop misleading orders in the way of the British outposts.

In accounting for the personification of good or evil, we must not leave out of consideration every body's tendency to anthropomorphism—to conceiving a deity that would be and do as he (or she) would do and be if he (or she) were a deity.† After the Babylonian Captivity and its consequent associations, it is not strange that the popular language of Christ's contemporaries disclosed traces of Semitic ideas of Satan and his angels and of purification by fire. Nor that Christ should have utilized the popular colloquial terms in adapting his discourses to the masses.

From our earliest dawning of intelligence as to right and wrong,—from our first experience of their

* See APPENDIX, "B."

† "One phase was exemplified by the Virginia freedman who on hearing of the assassination of President Lincoln and Booth's escape from the theater, prayed: "O Lord, catch him, and when you hab cotcht him, don't be so mercifu' as you generally am; it won't nebber do wid dem critters."

respective effects upon our own feelings, or consequences upon others,—we associate right-doing with peace, and wrong-doing with unrest and trouble. Naturally there comes in every land and age more or less of desire for the sanction of conduct—rewards and punishments. As to the details, however, no two individuals have precisely the same idea. But all are alike “stumped” with the fact of the existence of apparent evil; all confounded with the query of Crusoe’s catechumen: “Why God no kill Debil?” “The times of this ignorance God winked at.”

One attempted solution and remedy need not be adverted to, further than to quote from the author of “*Liber Librorum*” something written perhaps after attempting a missionary anniversary: “Traditional interpretation” of scripture “is slow, if not unwilling, to admit even the restoration of those who have here lived and died without even hearing of a Saviour. It looks for a counterpoise to the losses of the past in the salvation of infants, and in the possible prolongation of a millennial period until the number of the saved shall exceed the number of the lost; an arithmetical way of treating human happiness and misery which has in all ages found plenty of admirers, although anything less Godlike can scarcely be conceived.”

And another observer has remarked: “The Roman Emperor in the legend put to death ten learned Israelites to avenge the death of Joseph by his

brethren. And there have always been enough of his kidney, whose piety lies in punishing, who can see the justice of grudges, but not of gratitude. For you shall never convince the stronger feeling that it hath not the stronger reason, or incline him who hath no love to believe that there is good ground for loving: as we may learn from the order of word making, wherein *love* precedeth *lovable*."

Then there is another human foible which must not be ignored. It has well been affirmed that "the most obstinate beliefs that mortals entertain about themselves are such as they have no evidence for beyond a constant, spontaneous pulsing of their self-satisfaction—as it were a hidden seed of madness, a confidence that they can move the world without precise notion of standing-place or lever." I refer, of course, to that aggressive characteristic in visionary but dreadfully would-be-good people which in bloody Marys and Elisabeths we call arrogance and intolerance, in mere "sinners" it is replaced by a disposition to curse, when baffled. Vindictiveness would hardly be just the right designation of the tendency of a spoiled child to butt its own head against some object on finding its pet Borioboola-Gha unsubscribed to. Says this self-assertion: "He'll get his pay for it, sometime,—see if he doesn't!" "But suppose he dies and doesn't?" "Well, then, if there isn't a hell, there *ought* to be." And so the wish is father to the thought.*

* A peculiar illustration is disclosed in the words of a colored

There are, of course, exceptions to the general rule. But I am referring to the race in general. It is easier, says La Rochefoucauld, to understand mankind than the individual.* The fact of some future punishment being once entertained by the race, there needs but one item to round out the impression, namely, to fix upon its character. And what for this more natural and extreme than remorse, banishment and despair? Affirmatively so testify all the seers, Homer, Virgil, Dante, Milton, Shakespeare, &c. Says Tennyson :

“This is truth the poet † sings
That a sorrow’s crown of sorrow
Is remembering better things.”

It needs no stretch of fancy to forecast the bitterness of the situation :

“No penitence and no confessional:
No priest ordains it, yet they’re forced to sit
Amid deep ashes of their vanished years.”

Even uncertainty as to the future is a torment. In-

orator during the late suspense in obtaining the presidential vote: “My frien’s, once I preach to a right sinfu’ cong’gation. Dey was stiff-necked. Dey was self-sufficient. Dey wouldn’t lis’en to nuffin. I pray wid dem. ‘O Lord,’ I say, ‘take ‘em up in de holler ob yer han’ an’ hol’ ‘em ober de mouf o’ hell. Hol’ ‘em dar till ye scorch ‘em and scorch ‘em. But, O Lord, don’t lef ‘em drop in.’ So wid dese ’publican party. Dey wouldn’t lis’en to nuffin. Dey let our breddren in de Souf be ’timidated. Dey done bust de Freedm’s bank. Dey kep’ bad men where dey stole more’n eber colored people does. Now de Lord’s got ‘em in de holler ob his han’ and he’s holdin’ of ‘em ober de mouf o’ hell. An’ O Lord, scorch ‘em an’ scorch ‘em—but don’t lef ‘em drop in!”

A religious system whose be-all and end-all of revolution is the “mouth of hell,” reminds us of the famous receipt for making cannon: “First take a round hole and enclose it with iron: whatever you do, keeping fast hold of your round hole.”

* “Il est plus aise de connaitre l’homme en general que de connaitre un homme en particulier.”

† “Nessun maggior dolore
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria.”—DANTE.

deed, it is said that in some heathen countries the doctrine of future punishment and the consequent custom of purchasing indulgences has been a source of emolument and power to priests,—“a standing banquet for their delight in dominating.” If this were so in Christian lands, the fact would be an additional explanation for the prevalence of the belief the world over.

XX.

HAPPINESS AND HEAVEN.

Finally: as in contrasting the low and narrow view of life with that presented from the standpoint of religious culture, we recognized with the Rabbi that "the reward of one duty is the power to fulfill another," so also may we turn from the pusillanimous* to a magnanimous view of a future state. Who of us has not shared in Beattie's yearning appeal?—

"Shall I be left forgotten in the dust,
When fate relenting, lets the flower revive?
Shall nature's voice to man alone unjust,
Bid him, though doomed to perish, hope to live?
Is it for this fair virtue oft must strive
With disappointment, penury and pain?
No: heaven's immortal spring shall yet arrive,
And Man's majestic beauty bloom again
Bright through the eternal year of love's triumphant
reign."

And then we cry out with Milton :

"Oh, welcome! pure-eyed Faith, white handed Hope,
Thou hovering angel girt with golden wings."

* "Can a man love his own soul too well? Who, on the whole, constitute the nobler class of human beings? those who have lived mainly to make sure of their own personal welfare in another and future condition of existence, or they who have worked with all their might for their race, for their country, for the advancement of the kingdom of God, and left all personal arrangements concerning themselves to the sole charge of Him who made them and is responsible to himself for their safe keeping? Is an anchorite that has worn the stone floor of his cell into basins with his knees bent in prayer, more acceptable than the soldier who gives his life for the maintenance of any sacred right or truth, without thinking what will especially become of him in a world where there are two or three million colonists a month, from this one planet to be cared for?"—Dr. O. W. HOLMES, in "Elsie Venner."

And when come apprehensions of our last sleep, or any Shakespeare suggests

“A wild dedication of yourselves
To unpathed waters, undreamed shores,”

we heed the more solemn annunciation ;

“Deeds are the pulse of Time, his beating life,
And righteous or unrighteous, being done,
Must throb in after-throbs till Time itself
Be laid in stillness, and the universe
Quiver and breathe upon no mirror more.”

Ah, who has not at some time or another felt as did Charles Lamb or his Quaker friend, Hester Savoy :

“My sprightly neighbor gone before
To that unknown and silent shore,
Shall we not meet as heretofore
Some summer morning?
When from the cheerful eyes a ray
Hath struck a bliss upon the day,
A bliss that will not go away,
A sweet forewarning.”

The experiences of any two individuals—how alike, and yet how unlike! “Lives,” writes a thoughtful observer,* “are enlarged in different ways.” Still stand in common the sorrows incident to the limitations of human nature, the consequent self-discipline, and the ultimate blessing. Not any meat that perisheth is nutriment that permanently satisfies the soul. And so in one conclusion must we all concur: that “the chief end of man” is to labor for that which endureth unto eternal life.† And so, more and more, shall the “liberal christian” blend in the “evangelical” aspiration. “Come nearer, my God to me,” and the “evangelical christian” join the “liberal” song :

“Nearer, my God, to thee!”

* See APPENDIX “C.” † APPENDIX “D.”

More and more,

Whate'er denomination found,
Must friend to friend the world around,
The inter-echo alternate:

“UNTO ETERNAL LIFE.”

Adieu! Adieu! 't were hard to part
If parting were forever,
Nor whispered true the trusting heart
“Tis but for Time we sever,”
Nor a gentle Voice once heard on earth
Had charmed the soul to cherish
The pleasures choice of heavenly birth
Which never, never perish.

Roam as we may to find delight
Amid the bowers of Beauty,
Or work by day and watch by night
At the scepter-beck of Duty,
The soul will turn from riches reft
In passing Death's dire portal,
And fondliest yearn for some sweets left
Enlinked with the Immortal.

In starlit space we proudly pause
The rapt and revelling Reason,
And subtly trace the mystic laws
That guide each circling season;
But when we seem by visioned sight
To have searched and known the Eternal,
‘Tis but a gleam of the golden light
That glads the powers supernal.

The dulcet symphonies we hear
In grove and grot resounding,
The brooklet's hymn, the carol clear,
Sweet Echo's voices bounding,
The melody of human tongue,—
All harmonies terrestrial
Are but the prelude of the song
Of choristers celestial.

The fairy form that flits in grace
Through festive hall resplendent,
The witching charm of Woman's face,
With rose-tint wreath transcendent,

Age shall transmute, the spell be o'er,
And dimmed the bright eye's flashes,
As the fabled fruit of the Dead-sea shore
In the pilgrim's grasp is ashes.

But the sunny cheer of Virtue meek
That shines through the spirit-keeper,
Though Time besere and blanch the cheek,
Shall lovelier glow and deeper;
Aye, the mind may woo and the heart may cull
An Eden fading never,
For the High, the True, the Beautiful,
Are wed to the soul forever.

B. F. B.

THE END.

For Appendix see
See in front of the Contents

A VOICE FROM THE PEWS:

OR

A TABERNACLE - SUPPLEMENT

BY

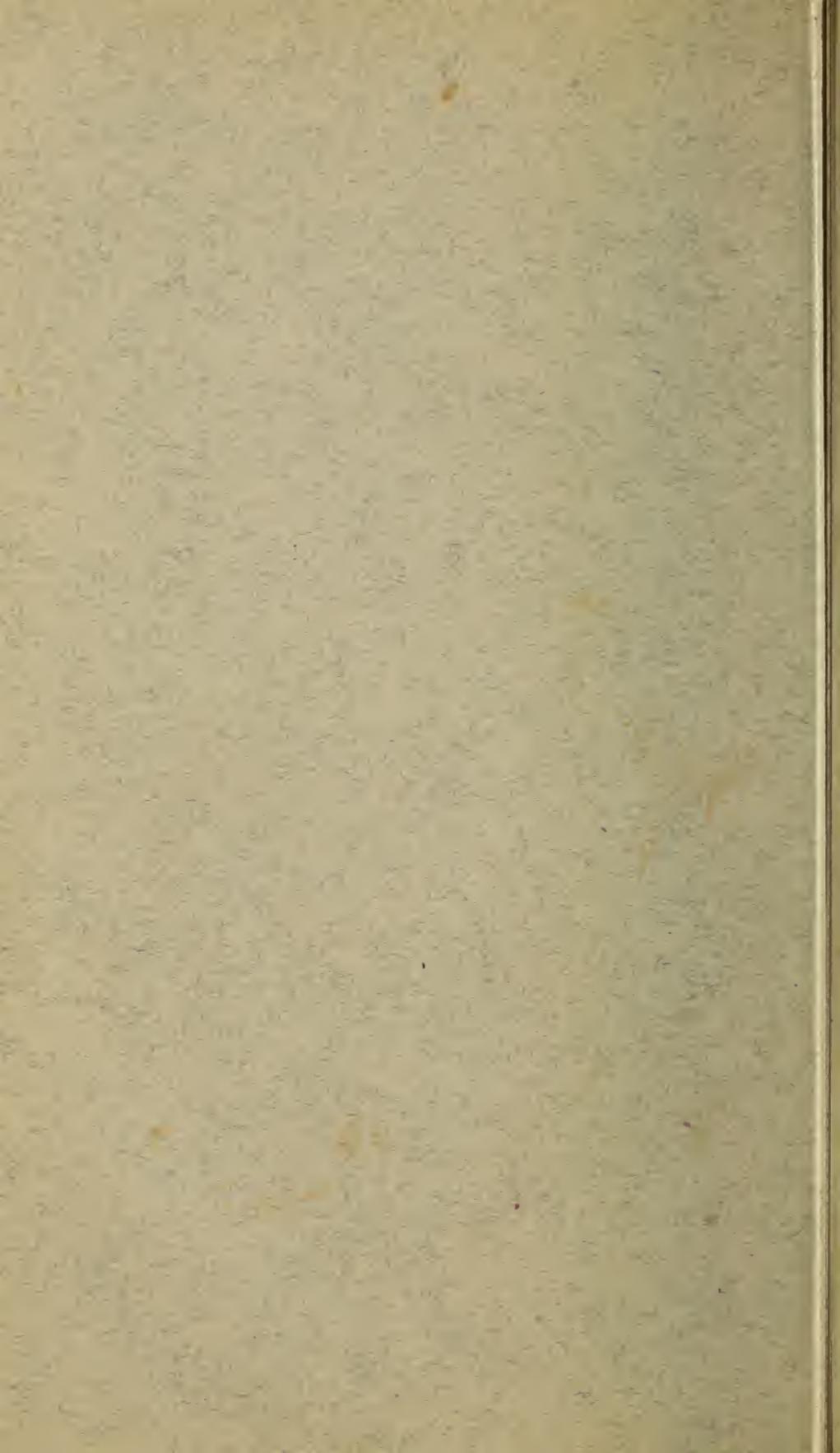
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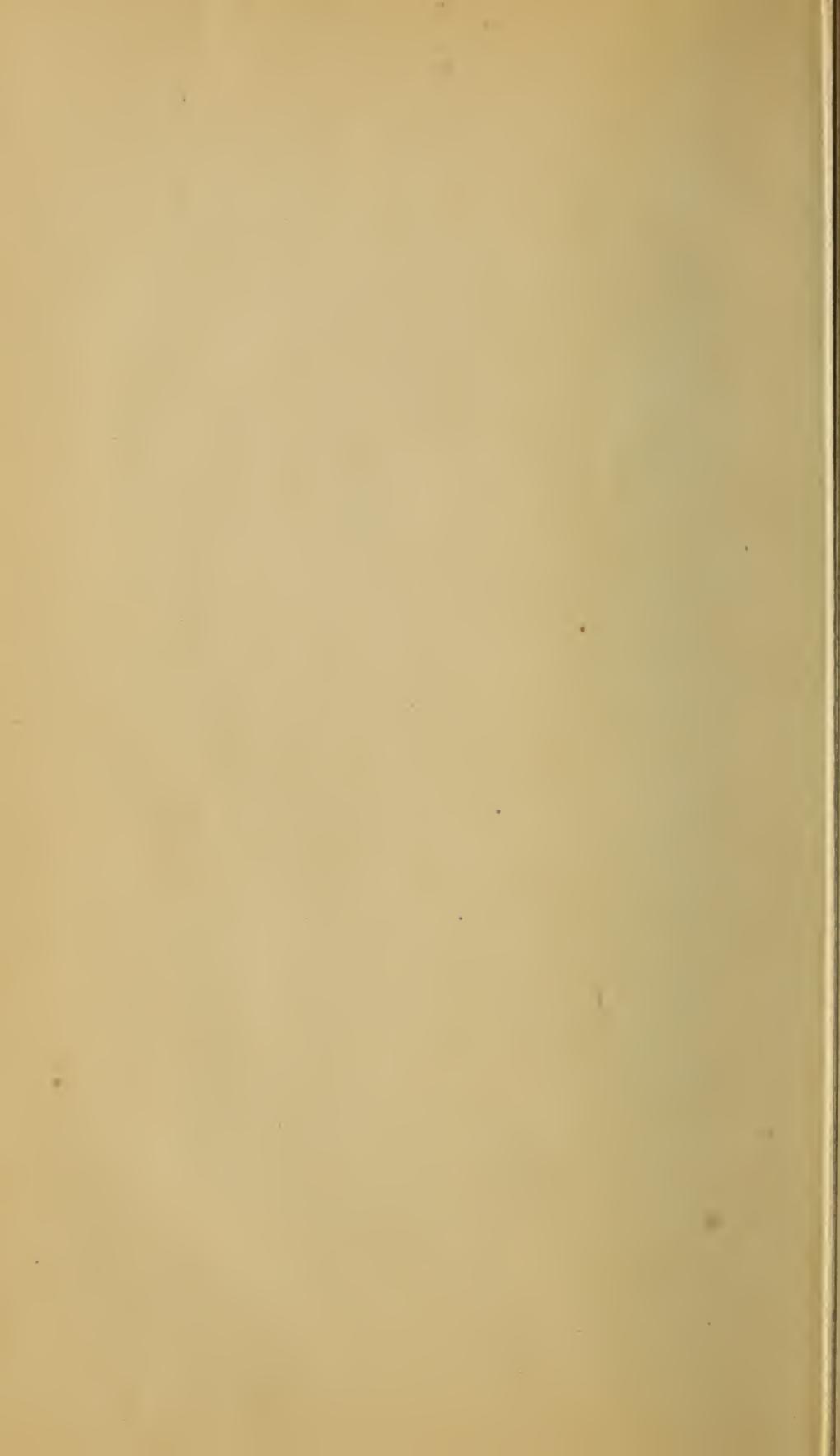
Diese Prediger stumvsten sich die Zähne an den Schalen ab, indessen
ich den Kern genoß.—GOETHE.

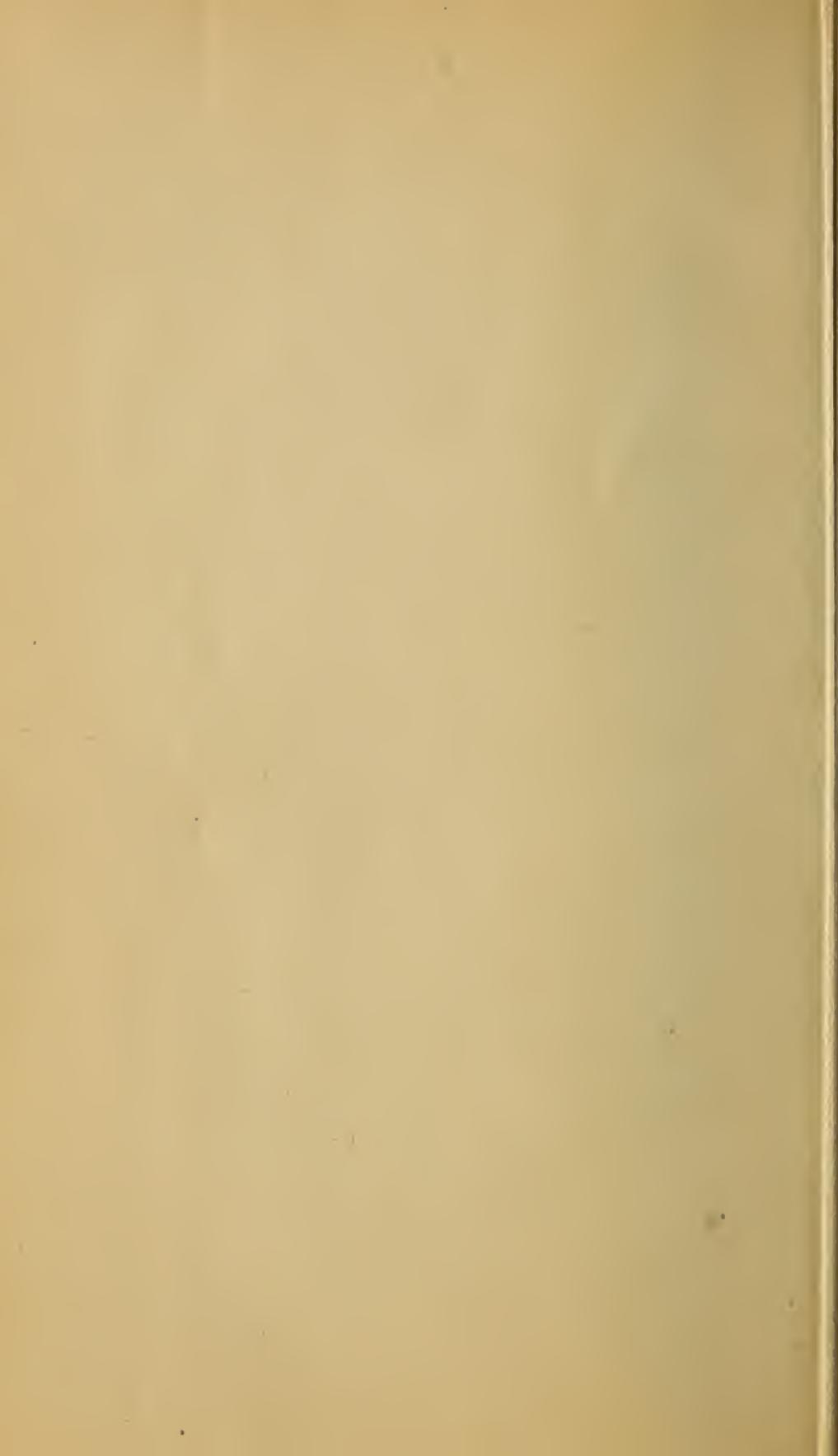
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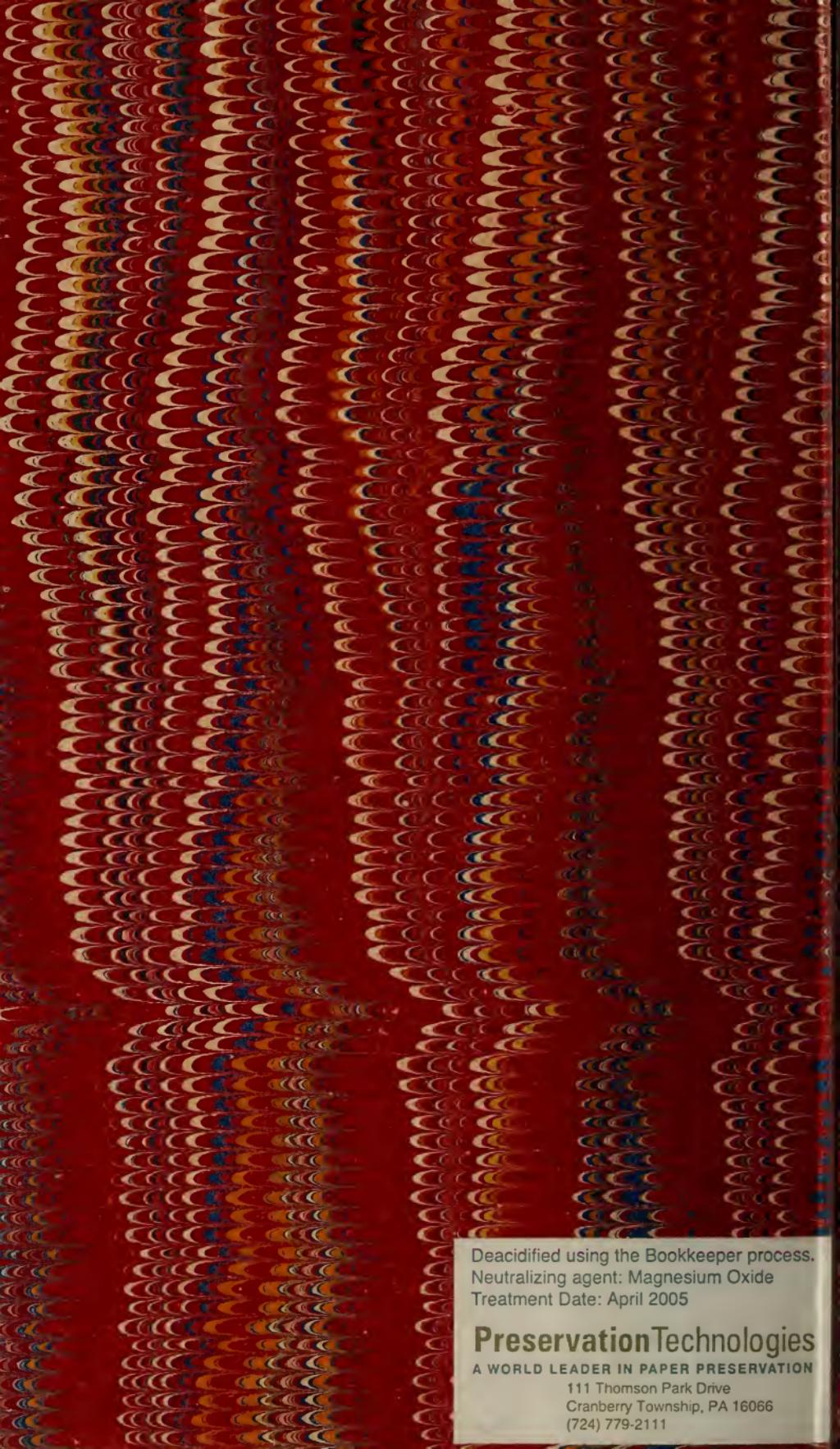
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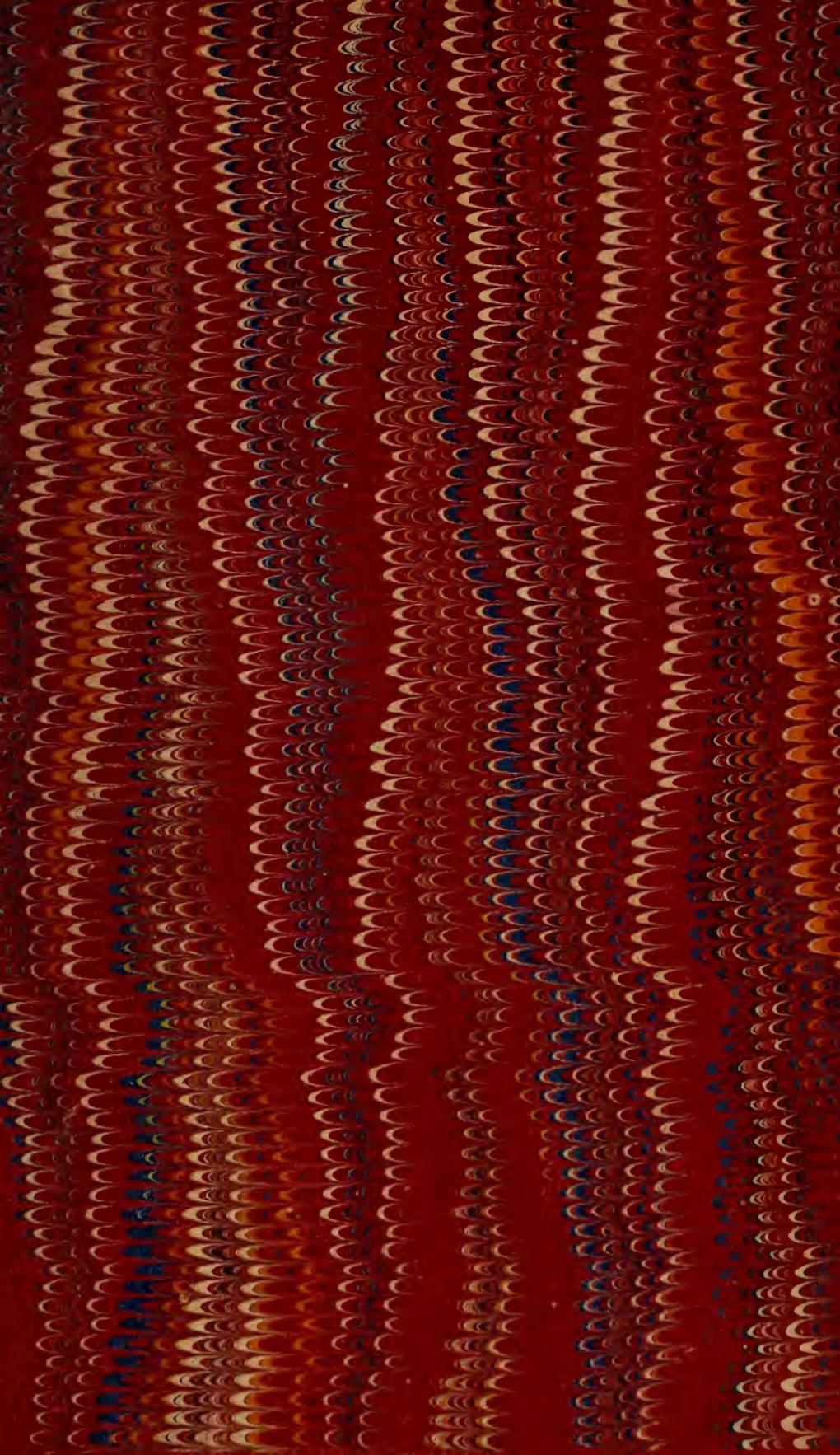


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